Men-at-Arms

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Armies of the War of the Triple Alliance 1864–70

Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay & Argentina

Gabriele Esposito • Illustrated by Giuseppe Rava

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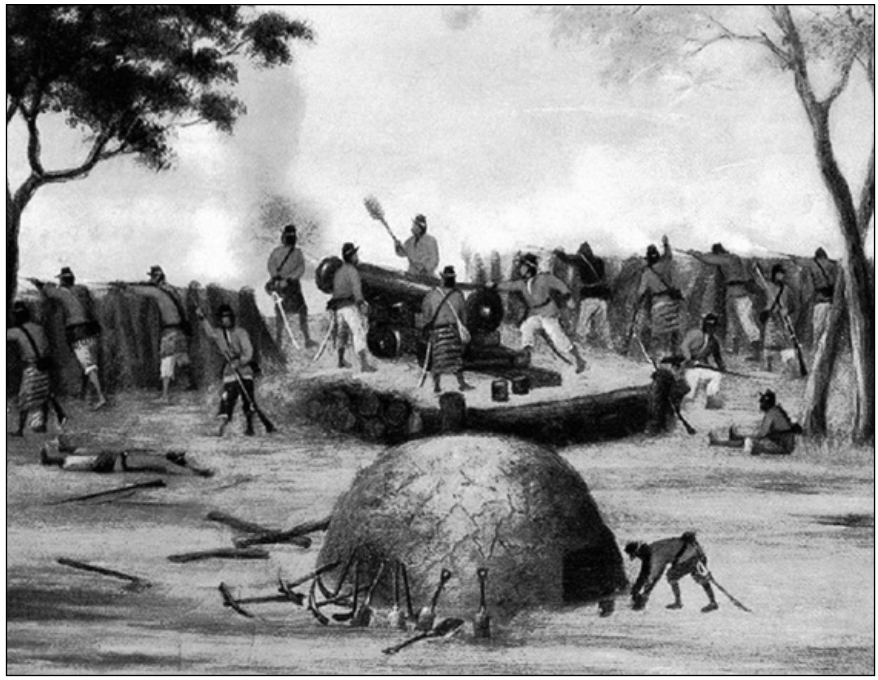

Gabriele Esposito • Illustrated by Giuseppe Rava
Series editor Martin Windrow

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ARMIES OF THE WAR OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE 1864–70

INTRODUCTION

A Brazilian cavalry officer (left) with a captured Paraguayan infantryman. This is one of the few photos showing the almost universal Paraguayan shako and striped *chiripá* kilt (see Plate A). The Brazilian officer wears blue campaign dress; as so often, this private-purchase uniform does not accord with official regulations.

The War of the Triple Alliance, also known as the "Paraguayan War," was the greatest military conflict in the history of South America. It was fought between four countries: by Paraguay, against an alliance formed by Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina. It was unique in South American history for the numbers of troops involved and, above all, for its terrible cost in lives. These deaths were to a great degree due to privation, disease, and famine, which the belligerents were neither equipped nor organized to alleviate. Of Brazil's approximately 50,000 deaths, two-thirds were from hardship and disease, particularly smallpox and cholera. The war cost Argentina some 30,000 lives, and the much smaller Uruguay nearly 5,000; but these losses pale in comparison with the catastrophic human price paid by Paraguay.

While the numbers are still widely disputed, some scholars have concluded that six years of war reduced the population of Paraguay from around 450,000–500,000 people to 160,000 at most – a loss of some 65–70 percent of the country's entire population – and the productive life of the country was largely destroyed for decades.[1]

The most important battle of the war, at Tuyutí on May 24, 1866, was the greatest ever fought on South American soil, involving some 24,000 Paraguayans against 35,000 Allied troops. Casualty figures are approximate, and, given the rudimentary medical care available, the numbers listed for wounded certainly mask many additional fatalities. With these reservations, however, Tuyutí probably cost Paraguay some 13,000 casualties (nearly 55 percent), of whom at least half were killed, and the Allies about 2,400 killed and 3,000 wounded (about 15 percent) – a combined casualty ratio of 31 percent of those engaged on both sides. To put those figures in context: at "Bloody Antietam" in September 1862 the Confederates suffered about 30.4 percent casualties and the Federals around 17.7 percent, giving a combined ratio of 22.7 percent.

The distances involved meant that the war was initially a matter of columns of a few thousand men seeking each other out in rugged and sparsely inhabited territory, but after 1865 larger armies maneuvered for Napoleonic-style positional battles at points of strategic importance – almost invariably, towns and forts on the major rivers. Most campaigns were conducted in marshy lowlands in a subtropical climate, and most of the soldiers found the punishing physical environment hard to endure. Their sufferings were exacerbated by poor and unreliable rations, and a

1 See Thomas L. Whigham, essays in *Latin American Research Review: "The Paraguayan Rosetta Stone: New Evidence on the Demographics of the Paraguayan War 1864–70" (1999); and "Refining the Numbers: A Response to Reber & Kleinpenning" (2002). Numbers were estimated by applying standard statistical models to prewar and postwar census records, such as they are.*

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Paraguayan territory during the War of the Triple Alliance, showing the approximate locations of the most important battles. The more open country west of the Rio Paraguay is known as the Chaco, and the more wooded eastern region between the rivers Paraguay and Paraña is the Paraneña. The decisive campaigns of the war were fought in the southeastern Central Lowlands. These have a very humid subtropical climate, with abundant rainfall throughout the year – but particularly in March–May and October–November – so the many rivers run through swampy jungle valleys.

lack of clean water. (The untrained officers were largely neglectful of their men, hygiene and medical care were often non-existent, and cholera and typhoid wiped out whole units.)

From the military-historical standpoint, the War of the Triple Alliance was the first "modern" conflict fought in South America. Being more or less contemporary with the Crimean and Austro-Prussian wars and the American Civil War, it was influenced by many developments from abroad. The war saw the first major employment in South America of military communication by telegraph, the transportation of troops and supplies by railway, and the use of observation balloons. New weapons, such as the Gatling gun, were tested, and smoothbore muskets were outclassed by new rifles employing the Minié system. This in turn led to a gradual change in battlefield tactics, such as the abandonment of the frontal cavalry charge. Cavalry had traditionally been a dominant element in South American warfare, but (as during the American Civil War) it now began to transform itself for an essentially mounted-infantry role. Medical services increased in importance under the scourge of disease, which could potentially destroy an entire army on campaign. For the first time the technical corps, the artillery and engineers, came to the fore, and new guns introduced for the artillery effected the construction of forts and fieldworks. In the field of riverine naval warfare, steam-powered and iron-clad vessels became dominant.

Before the War of the Triple Alliance the armies of South America were small, semi-professional at best, and not supported by the populations upon whom they often preyed. Political instability saw them repeatedly involved in internal struggles, and very frequently they were simply bands of followers of whichever *caudillo* currently held power. They had no discipline or training to speak of, their weaponry was obsolete, and they were seldom tested by being called upon to perform

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the tasks faced by professional soldiers elsewhere. The innovations and the harsh lessons of the Paraguayan War changed all this, leading to a general acceptance of the need for professionalism among the continent's armies. In the years between 1875 and 1910, all the South American countries would invite European military missions to train and organize their forces, with significant results.

THE ROAD TO WAR

Paraguay had achieved its independence in 1811 in a very particular way. In 1810, provoked by Napoleon's forced replacement of King Ferdinand VII of Spain with Napoleon's brother Joseph, most Spanish possessions in South America launched their wars of independence. The leaders of the United Provinces of La Plata (later named Argentina) expected that the territories of their new nation would encompass those of the former Spanish viceroyalty, including Paraguay and Uruguay. But their plans were thwarted in this regard: Uruguay, an enclave on the Atlantic coast surrounded by Portuguese Brazil, was still a royalist stronghold with a strong Spanish garrison, and Paraguay was still loyal to its Spanish governor.

The new Argentine government tried to conquer both these territories. Uruguay was occupied, but was subsequently lost to the Portuguese. The Argentine Gen Manuel Belgrano was sent to occupy Paraguay, which had been left defenseless by the Spanish, but the local inhabitants rallied to the militia and, after a minor battle, defeated the Argentine expedition. The Paraguayans declared their independence without Spanish opposition, and without being annexed by Argentina.

The exact borders of Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina would be disputed for decades, with Brazil and Argentina the main rivals, but Paraguay was not involved in any significant conflicts under the iron rule

LEFT The Paraguayan dictator Francisco Solano López (1827–70). This is one of the rare photographs of López dressed in a simple field uniform, since he usually preferred ornate parade dress based on contemporary Imperial French models. This strong-willed autocrat ran his country and his army as if they were his personal property, and led them both to utter ruin. Fearing a conspiracy against him to bring the war to an end, in summer 1868 he had several close relatives, many military and civic leaders, and some 200 foreigners (including diplomats) dragged before his "Bloody Tribunal" and executed.

RIGHT Supreme commander of the Triple Alliance military forces in 1865–66 and again in 1867–68, President Bartolomé Mitre (1821–1906) was one of the key figures in Argentine history. He was one of the leaders of the opposition to the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas, and after the latter's fall in 1852 he acquired power and influence, working for the dominance of Buenos Aires province. His "Unitarios" faction was at first defeated in the civil war of 1859–61, but later won the decisive battle of Pavón against the "Federalistas" led by his rival Justo José de Urquiza. After this he held the presidency until 1868, although (like his Uruguayan ally Flores) he was never entirely secure in his power.

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of its first two dictators, José Gaspar Rodríguez Francia (1814–40), and Carlos Antonio López (1841–62). The country enjoyed a period of growing prosperity; the dictators recruited foreign specialists, improved communications and infrastructure and sponsored some industrialization, and the very small initial population grew rapidly.

After his father's death in 1862, Francisco Solano López became "president" (though he ruled as an absolute dictator). He had been commander of the Paraguayan Army since the 1840s, and minister of war since 1856. He had also traveled on a series of diplomatic missions in South America and overseas, and in Europe he had developed a fatal fascination for Napoleon I and Napoleon III. He nurtured an ambition to become the new "Napoleon" of the La Plata region, expanding the borders of his country by conquering strategic territories. Both López and his father had invested in creating a sizable army, and – since control of the major waterways was essential – both a significant river fleet, and a defensive system of strong river forts at strategic points.

Paraguay has always suffered from its landlocked status in terms of commerce and communication with the rest of the world. Surrounded on three-quarters of its frontiers by the vastly larger Brazil and Argentina, it was impossible for this little state to emerge as the regional power of which López dreamed. In the north, Brazil's Mato Grosso province was thinly defended and rich in mineral resources; but his eyes were mainly drawn toward Uruguay, which offered access to the Atlantic via the Rio de la Plata estuary. The path to Uruguay lay across northern Argentina and the southern Brazilian provinces, with their profitable cultivation of yerba (the source of *maté*, a staple beverage). Here a Spanish-speaking population resented the rule of ex-Portuguese Brazil, which had recently put down a long local revolt (the War of the *Farrapos*) only with difficulty.

López sought a *casus belli* to start a war against Brazil, and he found it in Uruguay. Like Argentina, this territory had been torn apart by civil war for decades past (see below, "Chronology"). In 1863 the old struggle between conservative and liberal factions broke out once more when the liberal "Colorado" leader Venancio Flores rose against President Bernardo Berro of the "Blanco" party. In 1864 Brazil sent troops into Uruguay to support Flores, and since López had always supported the "Blancos" he declared this interference to be unacceptable. (The following year Flores was victorious, and if this victory were allowed to stand Uruguay would obviously ally itself with Brazil against Paraguay. Even then, however, López nurtured an unrealistic hope of reviving the "Blanco" cause.) Brazil's invasion of Uruguay gave López his excuse to attack the Empire – but neither he nor Emperor Pedro II knew how Argentina would respond.

In the event, López gambled too rashly on his belief that Argentina would never cooperate with its old rival Brazil, though when he invaded the latter country Argentina did initially remain neutral. This was mainly because the newly installed President Bartolomé Mitre was apprehensive that his old opponent Justo José de Urquiza, who was still powerful in his home province, might raise a new revolt. Mitre judged it best to wait and observe developments; but within four months López would also declare war on Argentina, thus provoking the Triple Alliance that would eventually crush Paraguay.

The Brazilian Emperor Pedro II (1825–91) was the most securely established of the three leaders of the Triple Alliance. Here he is photographed in 1865 during his visit to the Allied siege of the Paraguayan-held town of Uruguayana; he is dressed in the traditional *gaucho* ("cowboy") costume worn in the southern provinces of his empire, in order to court popularity among the Spanish-speaking population of this region. In 1835–45 the province had risen in revolt against his rule, and Brazilian leaders feared another opportunistic rebellion during the war against Paraguay. However, Rio Grande do Sul province remained loyal throughout the conflict, and the Paraguayan advance got no further than Uruguayana.

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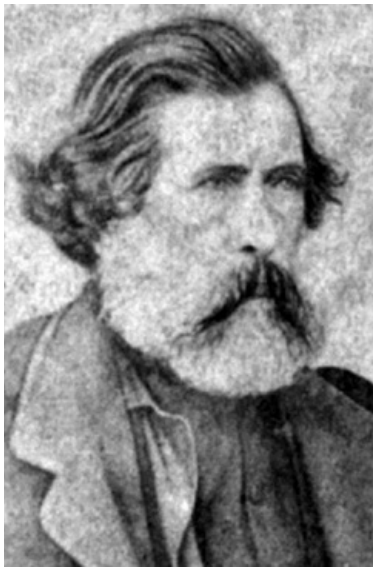

LEFT Marshal Luís Alves de Lima e Silva, Duke of Caxias (1803–80), widely judged to have been the best field commander of the war. When given command of the Brazilian forces in October 1866 he found the army hungry, disease-ridden, and demoralized after the defeat at Curupaytí the previous month. During most of the long lull in operations that lasted until August 1867, Caxias was acting Allied C-in-C, and he instituted reforms that fundamentally improved the Brazilian Army's discipline and quality. Between August 1867 and January 1868, President Mitre's resumption of overall command frustrated Caxias, but thereafter he led the Allies northward, bypassing successive Paraguayan defenses by flanking maneuvers and imaginative use of his river fleet. This decisive campaign was crowned by his capture of Asunción in the first week of January 1869.

RIGHT The Uruguayan president, Venancio Flores Barrios (1808–68). Flores was one of the leaders of the "Colorados" party that fought against the "Blancos" in the long Uruguayan civil wars, and his revolt in April 1863, subsequently supported by the Brazilian Army, was the *casus belli* for the War of the Triple Alliance. A personal friend of President Mitre and an experienced commander, in the first stages of operations he commanded the vanguard of the Allied army, which was mainly composed of Uruguayan veterans, and he gained some important victories. He was assassinated in 1868.

CHRONOLOGY

Background:

1825 **Brazil** becomes independent of Portugal, as constitutional monarchy (Emperor Pedro II will succeed his father in 1831). **Uruguay** revolts against Brazil, then seeks annexation to United Provinces of La Plata **(Argentina)**.

1825–28 Cisplatine War between Brazil and Argentina over Uruguay ends indecisively; Uruguay recognized as independent republic.

1828–61 Civil wars in **Argentina** between "Federalistas," who favor a federal republic, and "Unitarios" seeking a centralized state dominated by Buenos Aires province. Brazil intervenes (1851) against dictator Juan Manuel Rosas (r. 1839–52), and this Platine War ends with Rosas's defeat at battle of Caseros (1852) by Federalist leader Justo José de Urquiza, with Brazilian and Uruguayan help. Meanwhile:

1840–52 Simultaneous civil war in **Uruguay** between conservative "Blancos" faction (favored by Paraguay) and more liberal "Colorados" (supported by Brazil).

1853 In **Argentina**, Buenos Aires province declares independence.

1859 War breaks out between Buenos Aires, led by Bartolomé Mitre, and Argentine Federation headed by Urquiza.

1861 Mitre wins battle of Pavón, and gains constitutional reforms.

1862:

September 10 Francisco Solano López succeeds his father as dictator of **Paraguay**.

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October 12	Bartolomé Mitre is elected first president of **Argentine Confederation**.
1863:	
April 19	Venancio Flores of "Colorado" party (favored by both Brazil and Argentina) launches revolution in **Uruguay** against President Bernardo Berro of "Blanco" party (supported by Paraguay).
1864:	
August	Paraguay breaks off diplomatic relations with Brazil.
October 12	Brazilian forces invade Uruguay in support of Flores.
November	Paraguayan Navy seizes Brazilian ship **(12th)**; President López orders preparations for Paraguayan invasion of Brazil's Mato Grosso province **(13th)**.
The war:	
December	Paraguay declares war on Brazil **(13th)**; incursions into Mato Grosso begin **(27th & 29th)**. Argentina remains neutral, but allows passage of Brazilian ships on rivers through its territory.
1865:	
January 14	President Mitre rejects President López's request for Paraguayan troops to be allowed passage through Argentina's Corrientes province.
March 18	Paraguay declares war on Argentina.
April 14	Paraguayans invade Corrientes province.
May 1	**Triple Alliance agreed by Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina.** President Mitre of Argentina is appointed commander-in-chief.
May	Separate Paraguayan advance into Misiones province.
June	Paraguayan naval attack on Brazilian warships at Rio Riachuelo fails, with crippling losses **(11th)**. Further Paraguayan advance in Argentine territory.
August	Paraguayans occupy town of Uruguayana, on Rio Uruguay bordering Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul province **(5th)**; Uruguayan/Argentine army defeats separate Paraguayan force at Yatay **(17th)**.
September 18	Surrender of Paraguayan garrison of Uruguayana; López orders Paraguayan retreat to southern national borders.
1866:	
April 16–19	Allied capture of Itapirú battery; Allied army begins northward crossings of Rio Paraña near confluence with Rio Paraguay.
May	Allied victory at Estero Bellaco **(2nd)**; decisive Allied victory at first battle of Tuyutí/Paso de Patria costs Paraguay 13,000 casualties **(24th)**.
July 17	Costly Allied victory at Boquerón.
September	Allies capture fort at Curuzú **(3rd)**. President López tries to negotiate a separate peace with Argentina, but is rejected by President Mitre **(12th)**. Paraguayan victory at Curupaytí costs Allies 9,000 casualties **(22nd)**; Allied advance northward ceases, and army

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remains encamped around Tuyutí **(November 1866–July 1867)**.

1867:

February–August Allied supreme command temporarily held by Brazilian commander Duke of Caxias.

August–November Allied maneuvers to isolate Humaitá fortress from Asunción.

November 2 Indecisive second battle of Tuyutí; Paraguayan attack on entrenched Allied camps fails. By end of year Uruguayan contingent has left the army.

1868:

January 18 President Mitre returns to Buenos Aires, definitively handing supreme Allied command to Duke of Caxias.

February 19 Siege of Humaitá begins; Brazilian warships bombard batteries and force passage up-river. Vice-president orders Paraguayan government to leave Asunción **(21st)**.

March 23 Paraguayan position at Curupaytí falls.

June–August "Bloody Tribunal" of San Fernando, Paraguay, condemns hundreds of suspected anti-López conspirators, and foreigners, to death.

July 24–25 Garrison of Humaitá surrenders.

September López abandons defensive line on Rio Tebicuary; begins constructing new line eastward from river batteries at Angostura.

October 3 Post of supreme Allied commander abolished, but Caxias continues to exercise effective command by consent of Argentine Gen Juan Gelly y Obes.

December Caxias leads Allied force across to west bank of Rio Paraguay, north through swamps, then re-crosses **(4th)** to east bank behind Paraguayan defenses (the "Pikysyry maneuver"). Allied victories at Ytororó **(6th)** and Avay **(12th)**. López rejects surrender terms **(24th)** and flees to Cerro León. Allied victories at Ypacaraí **(25th)** and Lomas Valentinas **(27th)**;

Artist's impression of the Duke of Caxias ordering the Brazilian charge at the battle of Lomas Valentinas, December 27, 1868 – the last hopeless attempt by President López to stave off the Allied advance on Asunción. Lomas Valentinas was the field headquarters for the Paraguayan defensive line built eastward from Angostura, which was outflanked by Caxias's "Pikysyry maneuver." After this defeat the last year of the war was effectively a matter of guerrilla skirmishes against the relentless Brazilian pursuit of López's fugitive force.

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	Angostura surrenders **(30th)**.
1869:	
January	First Allied troops enter Asunción **(1st)**; occupation and looting of capital **(5th)**. Caxias resigns Brazilian command **(13th)**, replaced by Count d'Eu. Most Argentine troops return home.
August 12	Allied victory at Peribebuy.
August 16	Allied victory at Acosta Ñu (Campo Grande).
December 28	López begins flight to northeastern mountains of the Paraneña.
1870:	
March 1	Brazilian Gen da Câmara catches up with and defeats López's few remaining followers at Cerro Corá; death of López brings war to an end.

MILITARY OPERATIONS

First phase: Paraguayan incursions into Brazil, winter 1864–65

On December 27, 1864 the Paraguayans launched an assault on the province of Mato Grosso, attacking Coimbra fort with a riverborne column of 3,200 men led by Col Vicente Barrios. The fort, defended by a small garrison from the National Guard and "fixed corps" (see below, "The Brazilian Army"), was abandoned after two days' fighting. The same day, Col Francisco Resquín led another 4,000-strong Paraguayan column across the border at Dourado.

The Paraguayans continued to advance deeper into Mato Grosso, meeting no further resistance and taking many small towns; the bulk of the Brazilian army was far to the south in Uruguay. By the middle of January 1865 the whole southern part of Mato Grosso province was occupied, but any further advance northward was limited by difficult terrain and adverse weather, and the provincial capital, Cuyabá, remained in Brazilian hands. By the middle of that year the majority of the Paraguayan forces had returned home; about 1,000 troops were left as garrisons in the occupied area, which was to remain relatively calm until a Brazilian campaign to regain it in 1868. While quite unable to truly control this huge region, the Paraguayans had captured a large amount of booty, many cattle, vast quantities of ammunition, and weapons including some artillery.

Uruguay enters the war, January 1865; Paraguay attacks Argentina, March 1865

Meanwhile, the Brazilians and the Uruguayan "Colorados" commanded by Flores defeated the last "Blanco" government troops. The port of Paysandú was captured on January 2, 1865 after a 35-day siege, and the capital, Montevideo, was besieged by 14,000 Brazilians and "Colorados." President Atanasio de la Cruz Aguirre (who had recently replaced Berro) went into exile, and on February 22 the triumphant Flores entered Montevideo. From this date Uruguay was completely under the control

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of the Triple Alliance; Flores declared war on Paraguay, and Brazil was free to turn all its forces against López.

Having captured the mineral resources of the southern Mato Grosso to his north, López's next objective was the Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul to the southeast. Conquering it was the only way to reach Uruguayan territory in order to help the Blancos, and to dominate the waterways offering access to the Atlantic. To achieve this, Paraguayan troops would have to cross the Argentine border province of Corrientes. Both the Brazilians and the Paraguayans requested permission to march across Corrientes, but Argentina's President Mitre denied it to both.

In response, López declared war on Argentina on March 17, 1865. In the days that followed, a Paraguayan division under Gen Wenceslao Robles marched into Corrientes province; by April 14 some 2,000 of these soldiers had occupied its capital, the city of Corrientes, where the Paraguayan navy also captured two of Argentina's only three warships.

Second phase: the Triple Alliance, and operations May–September 1865

The Triple Alliance treaty was signed on May 1, 1865. The Argentines needed to form an army, and all able-bodied men were quickly enlisted into the National Guard (see below, "The Argentine Army"). By May 11, 2,000 Argentine regulars commanded by Gen Wenceslao Paunero were confronting the Paraguayan division commanded by Gen Robles across the Rio Paraña close to Corrientes city. The Paraguayans abandoned their positions and the Argentine troops crossed the river, encountering no resistance to their advance until they reached Corrientes itself. The city was recaptured after bitter fighting on May 25, but a Paraguayan relief force arrived the following day; Paunero was obliged to re-cross the river and resume his previous positions while the Paraguayans re-occupied the city. Land operations then paused, due to Brazil's decisive naval victory on June 11 at the mouth of the Rio Riachuelo, an eastern tributary of the Paraña just south of Corrientes (see below, "Naval operations").

Meanwhile, during May another 12,000 Paraguayans led by Gen Antonio Estigarribia had crossed the Argentine border south of Encarnación into Misiones province, and were now pushing south for the Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul. They took San Borja on June 12, and traveled up the Rio Uruguay to occupy the important frontier town of Uruguayana on August 5. Northeast of there, a 3,200-strong division under Col Pedro Duarte was bloodily defeated at Yatay on August 17 by Gen Flores and Gen Paunero with 10,000-plus Uruguayan and Argentine troops from Rio Grande do Sul; half the Paraguayans were killed and the rest captured, for fewer than 600 Allied casualties. General Estigarribia's 8,000 Paraguayans in Uruguayana were soon besieged by an Allied army of 18,000, and on September 18, 1865 they surrendered.

Autumn–winter 1865: Paraguayan retreats

After the defeats at Riachuelo and Yatay and the loss of Uruguayana, President López ordered a total withdrawal from Argentine territory, with the intention of defending his frontiers until final victory or death. From this moment Paraguay's war became strategically defensive, although the conduct of operations was often tactically aggressive. Throughout the

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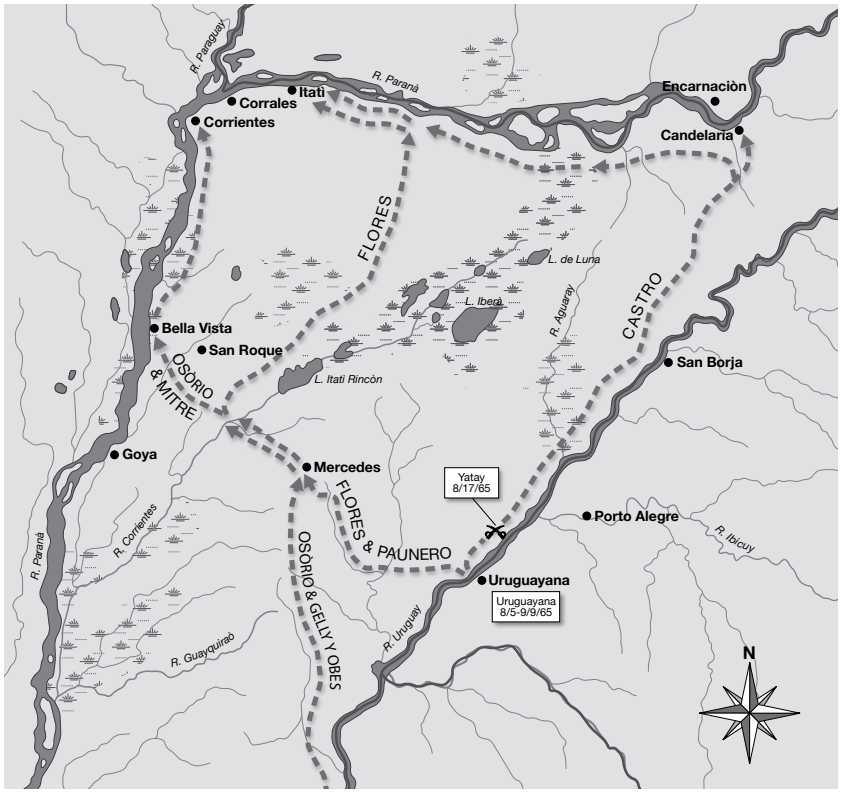
autumn of 1865 and winter of 1865–66, about 19,000 Paraguayan soldiers made their way home from Argentine territory, and López gradually began to concentrate all his previously dispersed forces along the northern bank of the Paraña. The Allied army was encamped opposite them on the southern bank, under the supreme command of Argentina's President Mitre.

April–September 1866: Estero Bellaco, Tuyutí, and Curupaytí

The following spring, López began to send raiding parties of 100–200 men across the Paraña to harass the Allied camps. After some weeks of these attacks, in mid-April the Paraguayans made a major canoe-borne attempt to regain a sandbank battery position at Itapirú; this was repelled, and of the initial 800-strong assault force only 300 returned to their lines. After this success the Allies started a major river-crossing operation close to the confluence of the Paraguay and Paraña rivers, and the invasion of Paraguay began.

Over a period of two weeks an army of 57,000 Allied troops (42,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry) was carried across the Rio Paraña in two main waves. The crossings were supported by Brazilian Navy ironclads, and despite a few Paraguayan attacks the whole operation passed off without significant problems. This was something of a logistic miracle by the standards of the day: during the war in general the soldiers of both armies were transported, fed, and supplied very badly. The entire logistic system was still based on horses, with trains being scarcely used for the transportation of troops and only by the Paraguayans. From the accounts of participants we know that uniforms, weapons, and munitions



Sketch map showing the expulsion of Paraguayan forces from Argentina's Corrientes and Misiones provinces and Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul province during autumn 1865. After a few successful months the Paraguayans' central drive to the south was blocked by the Brazilian river victory of Adm Barroso at Riachuelo just south of Corrientes city (June 11, 1865), and López withdrew on that front. In the southeast, Paraguayan troops advanced some 120 miles (200km) from Encarnación, taking San Borja (June 12), but were halted at Yatay on the Rio Uruguay (August 17). Although their main force had occupied Uruguayana (August 5), it was besieged there and forced to surrender after six weeks (September 18). From a joint base at Concordia in Argentina's Entre Rios province (off this map to the south), the Allies launched several columns – led by Gen Manuel Luís Osório (Brazil), Gen Juan Andrés Gelly y Obes and Gen Bartolomé Mitre (Argentina), Gen Venancio Flores (Uruguay), Gen Wenceslao Paunero (Argentina), and Col Enrique Castro (Uruguay) – which chased the Paraguayans back to their borders by the end of the year.

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were supplied irregularly, and only the Brazilians would achieve a gradual improvement to their supply system before the end of the war.

The Paraguayan retreat stopped at Estero Bellaco, where they had the two rivers Paraguay and Paraña protecting their right and left flanks. On the margins of the waterways a *carrizal* terrain of lagoons, mudflats, and sandbanks was dominated here and there by high hummocks and bluffs, from which artillery could fire down upon infantry struggling in the mud below. At Estero Bellaco, on May 2, Gen José E. Díaz with some 6,000 Paraguayans attacked about 8,000 Allied troops, and in particular the vanguard mainly composed of Gen Flores' Uruguayans. The Uruguayan infantry battalions formed defensive squares and repulsed the attackers; the Paraguayans lost 2,300 men, but the Allied vanguard was more or less destroyed. After this punishing action the Allies moved a short distance north to the area around Tuyutí, where they built an immense camp partly defended with entrenchments and field fortifications.

López now assembled all the troops at his disposal, including all his best cavalry regiments and infantry battalions; this force of about 24,000 veterans was the best Paraguay had ever deployed. López's plan was simple: a surprise general attack against the Allied positions, with four attacking columns each led by cavalry. The 35,000-odd Allied soldiers in the camps (*c.*22,000 Brazilians, 11,800 Argentines, and 1,200 Uruguayans or *"Orientales"*) were reorganizing for a further advance into Paraguay.

The first battle of Tuyutí commenced on the morning May 24, 1866, when the attacking columns were commanded (right to left) by Gen Barrios, Col Díaz, Col Marcó, and Gen Resquín. The first column to advance was that of Marcó, aiming at the center of the Allied army; after having defeated the foremost Uruguayan infantry this was repulsed by Brazilian brigades, partly thanks to the intelligent protection of Maj Emílio Mallet's artillery with a large wet ditch. The column of Díaz then attacked on Marcó's right, where it had to divide to pass around a lagoon. Striking the Allied left-center, it was defeated by the bulk of the Uruguayans and by Brazilian units brought up from the reserve, and was completely destroyed. General Barrios's delayed hook around the Allied far left flank swept aside the few Brazilian units in its path, and almost reached the camps before being countered by the Brazilian reserve cavalry. The cavalry-heavy columns of Gen Resquín attacked the Argentines on the Allied right wing. One account states that the Argentine cavalry were routed when they fought dismounted; whatever the truth of that, the Argentine infantry certainly formed squares and repulsed the Paraguayan cavalry with great loss. The Paraguayans pressed home their attacks courageously, but were gradually driven back and in some cases surrounded by Allied counterattacks, before finally leaving the field.

This most decisive battle of the war cost the Paraguayans some 13,000 of the best troops they had, at least 6,000 of them being killed, while the Allies lost perhaps 2,400 killed and 3,000 wounded. Eyewitness descriptions stressed the courage and ability of the Paraguayan cavalry, and also Paraguayan shock at the terribly costly failure of their tactics based on frontal cavalry charges.

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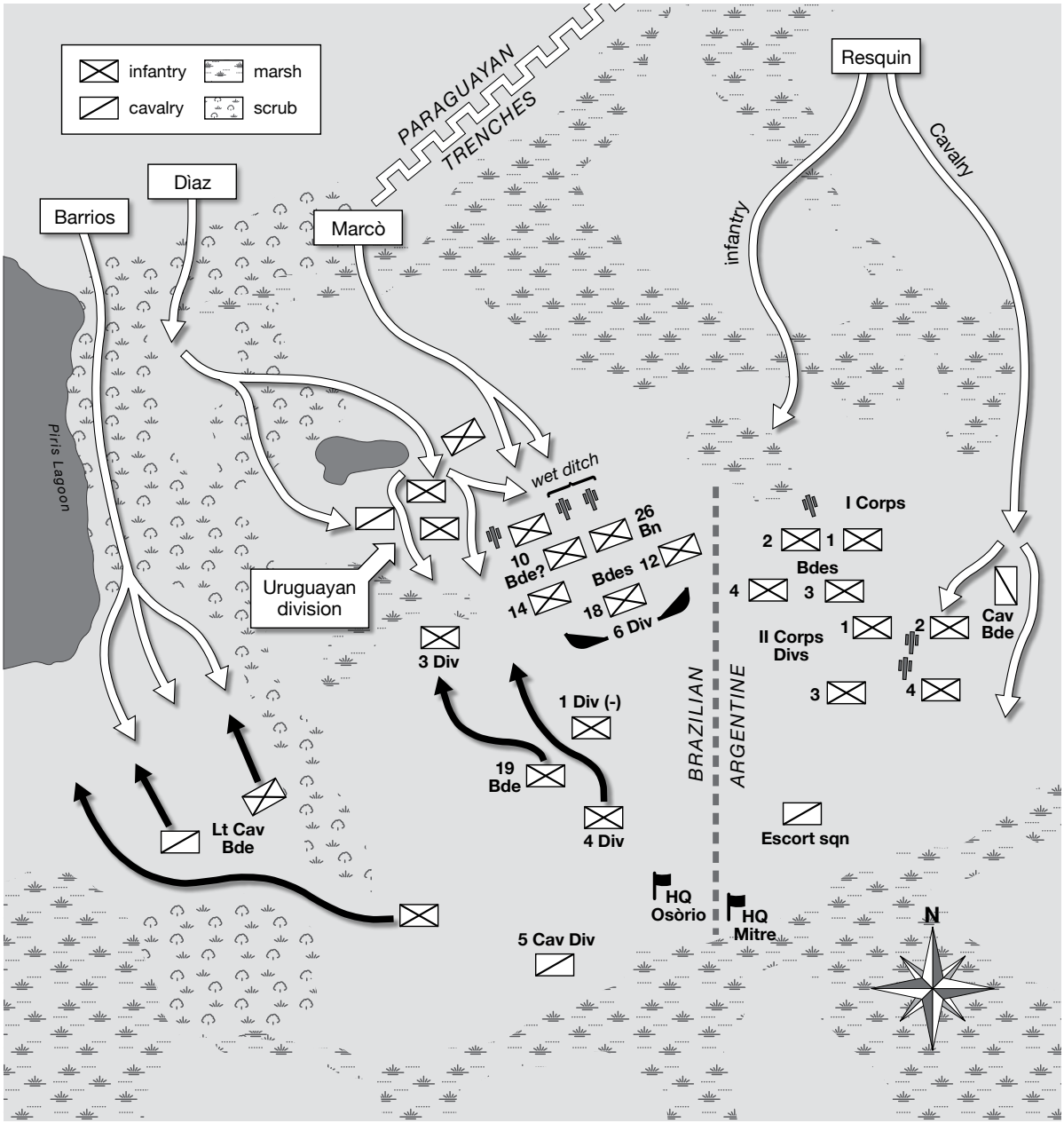

After such severe and irreplaceable losses at this "South American Waterloo," the Paraguayans were never again able to organize a major offensive operation against the Allies with any chance of victory. Their final defeat was simply a question of time, no matter the determination with which López defended the national territory. He started to retire slowly, and blunted the Allied pursuit bloodily on July 18 at Boquerón. Here perhaps 6,000 Paraguayans under Gen Elizardo Aquino attacked a similar number of Argentines and Uruguayans led by the Argentine Gen León de Pallejas; casualties were very heavy on both sides, and both commanders were killed. Resuming their withdrawal, the Paraguayans built fortified batteries at many strategic points; when the Allies caught

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Sketch map of the first battle of Tuyutí, May 24, 1866, with partial identification of Allied units. The terrain, a plain of rough pastureland broken up by large areas of marsh and scrub, offered neither side a clear advantage. The cavalry-led Paraguayan attacks were determined, and the result could have gone either way. Two influential aspects were the 'moat' dug to protect the Brazilian artillery in the center, and Gen Barrios's delay in delivering the Paraguayan right hook through scrubland into the Allied left rear. After hours of bloody fighting the eventual Allied victory was not obvious to the C-in-C, the Argentine Gen Mitre; waiting upon the Paraguayans' next move, he failed to realize and exploit his advantage.

Orders of battle, First Battle of Tuyuti, 24 May 1866

PARAGUAY

1st Column (Gen Barrios)
6 infantry battalions
2 cavalry regiments
Light artillery, plus 4 rocket-launchers
2nd Column (BrigGen Resquín)
2 infantry battalions
8 cavalry regiments
2 rocket-launchers
3rd Column (Col José E. Díaz)
5 infantry battalions
2 cavalry regiments
4 light howitzers
4th Column (Col Hilario Marcó)
4 infantry battalions
2 cavalry regiments
Reserve (Col José M. Bruguéz)
2 horse artillery regts, plus various units

URUGUAY (C-in-C: Gen Venancio Flores)

1st Division
Cavalry Brigade (Col Enrique Castro)
1st, 2nd, & 3rd National Guard Cavalry Regts
1st Infantry Brigade (Col León de Palleja)
Inf Bns "Florida"& "24 de Abril"
2nd Infantry Brigade (LtCol Marcelino)
Inf Bns "Voluntarios de la Libertad" & "Independencia"
Artillery Brigade

BRAZIL (C-in-C: Gen Manuel Luís Osório)

1st Division (Gen Argolo)
8th Brigade (Col D. José)
8th & 16th Inf Bns
10th & 46th Volunteer Inf Bns
10th Brigade (Col Resin)
2nd & 13th Inf Bns
22nd, 26th, & 40th Volunteer Inf Bns
3rd Division (Gen Antônio de Sampaio)
5th Brigade (Col Belo)
3rd, 4th, & 6th Inf Bns
4th Volunteer Inf Bn
7th Brigade (Col J. Machado)
1st Inf Bn
6th, 9th, & 11th Volunteer Inf Bns
4th Division (Gen de Sousa)
11th Brigade (Col José Auto)
10th & 14th Inf Bns
20th & 31st Volunteer Inf Bns
13th Brigade (LtCol C. Pereira)
12th Inf Bn
1st, 19th, & 24th Volunteer Inf Bns
6th Division (Gen Monteiro)
12th Brigade (Col Kelly)
5th & 7th Inf Bns
3rd & 16th Volunteer Inf Bns
14th Brigade (LtCol Salustiano)
2nd Inf Bn
4th, 21st, & 30th Volunteer Inf Bns
18th Brigade (Col E. Silva)
38th, 41st, & 51st Volunteer Inf Bns
2nd Cavalry Division (Gen J. L. Mena Barreto)
1st Brigade (LtCol Bastos)
2nd & 3rd Line Cav Regts
1st Nat Gd Cav Corps
4th Brigade (LtCol M. de Oliveira Bueno)
2nd, 5th, & 7th Nat Gd Cav Corps
5th Cavalry Division (Col T. Pinho)
3rd Brigade (LtCol Mesquita)
4th, 6th, & 11th Nat Gd Cav Corps
15th Brigade (Col Demetro Ribeiro)
3rd, 9th, & 10th Nat Gd Cav Corps
Independent Volunteer Cavalry (BrigGen Neto)
1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th Volunteer Cav Corps

Artillery train (Gen Andrea)
17th Brigade (Col Gurjao)
1st Mounted Artillery Regt
1st & 3rd Foot Arty Bns
19th Brigade (Col Freitas)
Engineer Bn
7th & 42nd Volunteer Inf Bns

ARGENTINA (C-in-C: Gen Bartolomé Mitre)

I Army Corps (Gen Wenceslao Paunero)
1st Division (Col Rivas)
1st Brigade (LtCol Rozetti)
1st & 5th Line Inf Bns
2nd Brigade (LtCol Charlone)
"Legión Militar"

2nd Division (Col Arredondo)
3rd Brigade (LtCol Fraga)
4th & 6th Line Inf Bns
4th Brigade (LtCol Orms)
2nd Line Inf Bn
1st Volunteer Inf Bn
5th Brigade (Col Riveros)
1st Nat Gd Bn of Corrientes
1st Nat Gd Bn of Santa Fe
Paraguayan Legion **(1)**
Cavalry Brigade (Col Fernandes)
Mitre's Escort
1st Line Cavalry Regt
Volunteer Cav Regt of Santa Fe
Artillery Brigade (LtCol Nelson)
2nd, 3rd, & 4th Horse Artillery (light)

II Army Corps (Gen Juan Gelly y Obes)
1st Division (Col Coneza)
2nd, 3rd, & 4th Nat Gd Bns of Buenos Aires
2nd Division (Col Bustillos)
1st & 5th Nat Gd Bns of Buenos Aires
3rd Division (Col Vedia)
9th Line Inf Bn
2nd Volunteer Legion

Cavalry Division (Col Oryazabal)
1st & 3rd Nat Gd Cav Regts

Artillery (Col Federico Mitre)
2nd Arty Regt

Note:
(1) Militarily unimportant, this small unit of emigré anti-López Paraguayans would provide members of the new government installed by the Brazilians after capturing Asunción.

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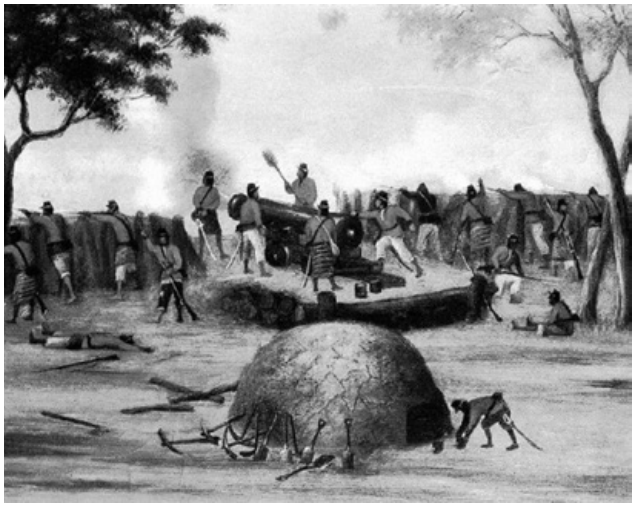
up these were defended stubbornly before any survivors tried to slip away. A typical example was the fort at Curuzú, attacked on September 1–3; supported by naval gunfire, some 8,000 Brazilian and 1,000 Argentine troops were landed, and took the fort from 2,500 defenders. The cost included the Brazilian warship *Rio de Janeiro*, which sank after hitting two Paraguayan mines.

Paraguayan tactics were spectacularly vindicated on September 22, 1866, when some 17,000 Allied soldiers attacked 5,000 Paraguayans defending a double defensive line of fortified batteries anchored on the high bank of the Rio Paraguay at Curupaytí. There was argument between the Brazilian and Argentine commanders over the plan of attack, and, despite supporting fire from the Brazilian ships the Allied assaults were repulsed with terrible losses. The Paraguayans had concentrated 50 artillery pieces and seven infantry battalions to defend the position; after breaking through the first line the Allied infantry were trapped on low, open ground under the guns of the dominating second line, and were slaughtered. The Paraguayans lost just 92 killed; Allied casualties were reported as 4,000 killed, with an even greater number wounded and abandoned when the Allies fell back. The Argentine troops suffered particularly badly, and their survivors remembered the action as badly planned and doomed from the outset. This defeat ensured that the war would last perhaps a year longer than it need have. A long pause in active operations would follow before the Allies could resume the war of maneuver.

A naïve but valuable contemporary painting of the Paraguayan second line of defense at the battle of Curupaytí, September 22, 1866; see larger reproduction on title page. Note gunners and infantrymen wearing shakos, red blouses, and white trousers or striped kilts (see Plate A). Although they were temporary field fortifications of timber and earth, the Paraguayan positions built under the supervision of López's British engineer, George Thompson, proved to be strong. Heavy artillery pieces were evenly distributed along the line in strong redoubts; ammunition and weapons were stored in small bunkers made of wood and earth – note the domed structure in the foreground. The Allies had great difficulty in countering the Paraguayan artillery, outdated though most of it was. Although the drawing is unclear, if the scale is anywhere near accurate then the heavy cannon shown here could be a 68-pounder.



Pause in operations, October 1866–August 1867

After this costly and demoralizing defeat the Allied army had to regroup and reorganize itself over many months during which it remained encamped around Tuyutí, though minor probes, raids, and bombardment of river targets continued. This long period of inactivity saw disease spread throughout the camps causing thousands of deaths, particularly among the Argentines and Uruguayans. Early in 1867, President Mitre of Argentina and President Flores of Uruguay were obliged to return to their capitals to confront internal opposition, and the supreme Allied command passed in February to the Brazilian Gen Luís Alves de Lima e Silva (later created Duke of Caxias) until Mitre returned in August 1867.

Since his appointment as commander of the Brazilian Army in October 1866, Caxias had begun instituting reforms that noticeably improved its quality; he replaced inadequate officers, oversaw retraining and re-equipment, and improved at least to some extent the chronically inadequate supply system and medical corps. At the end of July 1867 a British diplomat reported that the army had 5,000–6,000 sick, but 45,000 Brazilians, 7,000–8,000 Argentines, and 1,000 Uruguayans in the field. A steady flow of about 2,000 reinforcements was arriving each month to keep these numbers up.

Lopéz used this period to concentrate his

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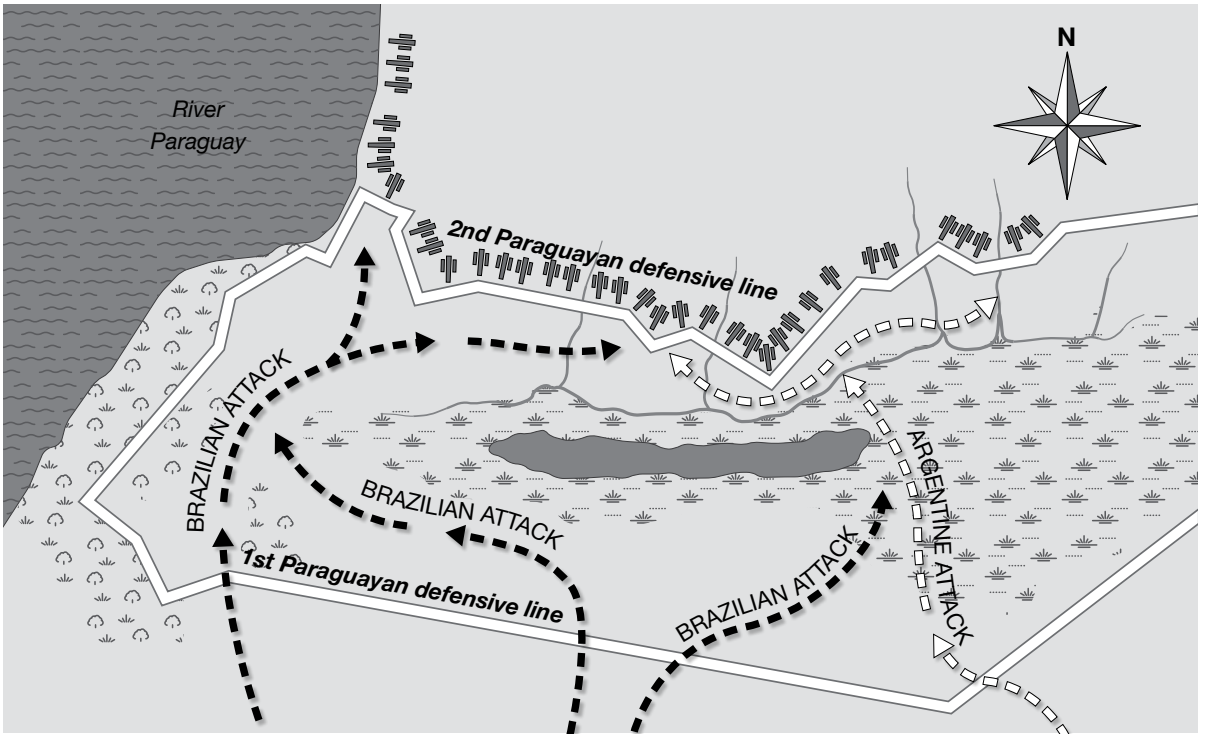

last troops around his headquarters and main river fortress at Humaitá, and to recruit new soldiers from the militia. This does not seem to have had impressive results, according to the same British correspondent, G.Z. Gould: his informants told him that of a total 20,000 Paraguayan troops only 12,000 at best were of adequate quality, the rest being old men, invalids, and boys as young as 12 years of age. Although the Paraguayans had previously captured numbers of Minié rifles, most still carried smoothbore flintlocks. The army was very short of horses, and those that they had were in bad condition.

Sketch map of the battle of Curupaytí, September 22, 1866. The preparatory fire of the Brazilian naval squadron had little effect on the defenses, and it necessarily ceased so as to allow the Allied infantry attacks to go in. The assault columns greatly outnumbered the Paraguayan defenders; they managed to penetrate the first defensive line, but made no further progress, being slaughtered on the low, marshy ground in front of the higher second line as they vainly sought practical points to attack while under fire from most of the 50 artillery pieces. The Paraguayan infantrymen had been ordered to try to bring down Allied officers as a priority, thus leaving the rank-and-file leaderless. After his troops suffered hugely disproportionate losses Gen Mitre was forced to order them to withdraw, and it took the Allied army about a year to recover from this defeat.

Third phase: invasion of Paraguay, August 1867–January 1869

During the second half of 1867 the Allies remained basically stalled by the formidable obstacle of the great fortress of Humaitá, which was the heart of López's defense. After returning to resume overall Allied command, Mitre favored a direct drive up-river carried and supported by the Brazilian Navy, but the Brazilian commanders were unwilling to risk warships and troop transports against Humaitá's strong artillery. Built on a superb defensive site commanding a sharp S-bend of the Rio Paraguay, this "Paraguayan Sebastopol" was an extensive complex of stone-built bastions and casemates mounting 114 artillery pieces distributed in 12 batteries, most of them dominating narrows protected by three chain-booms, two lines of explosive mines, and a stockade chicane. Before trying to force this passage the Brazilians insisted on land operations around the Paraguayans' left flank, to cut the fortress's lines of communication and supply from Asunción. During a period of relative inactivity in November 1867, the Paraguayans launched an attack on the Allied entrenched encampments at Tuyutí. Although this achieved some

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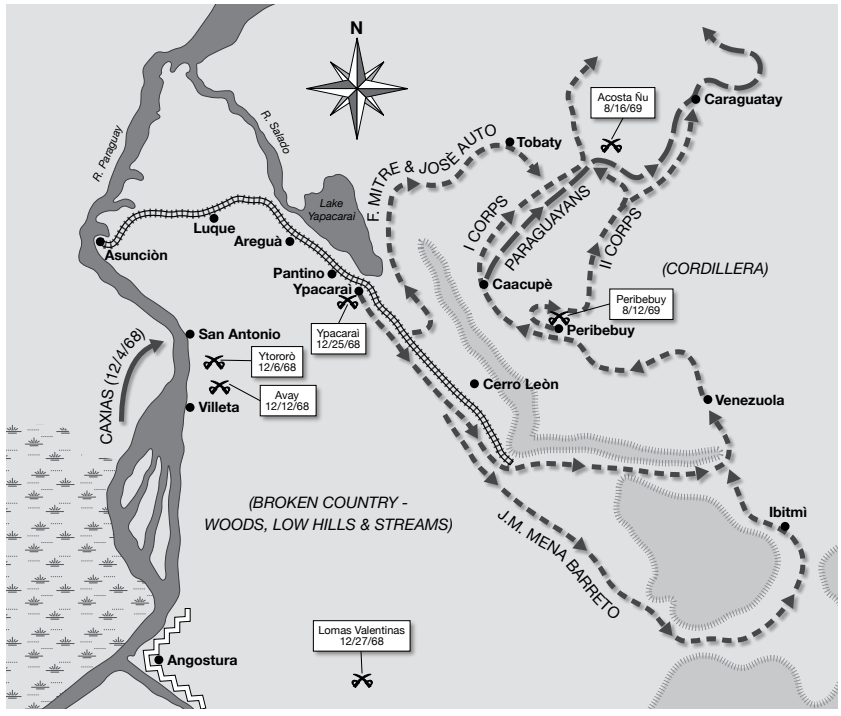
penetrations it was numerically too weak to succeed, and was repulsed after each side had suffered about 2,400 casualties.

In January 1868 President Mitre was obliged to return once more to Buenos Aires to deal with political opponents. Caxias was definitively appointed Allied commander-in-chief, gaining the freedom to conduct the campaign according to his own vision. He isolated Humaitá by operations on its landward approaches, and on February 19 his fleet moved up-river. The ironclads bombarded the batteries, and after some setbacks and a good deal of damage they forced a passage; some then made the gesture of steaming all the way up to Asunción. Alarmed, Vice-President Domingo Sánchez ordered the evacuation of the Paraguayan government from Asunción to Luque, and in the following weeks many other citizens would also flee the capital. Although it always required a battle to do so, the Brazilian fleet was now able to pass back and forth past Humaitá, to bombard and to land troops.

Cut off from all sides and running out of food and ammunition, the Humaitá garrison finally surrendered on July 24, 1868. In September, López abandoned a defensive line along the Rio Tebicuary and fell back closer to the capital. His British engineer George Thompson constructed a fortified defensive line 22 miles (35km) south of Asunción, stretching from the strong river batteries at Angostura, along the Pikysyry stream and 6 miles (10km) eastward toward the Ypoa Lagoon marshes. Meanwhile the Allied advance northward up the Rio Paraguay, accompanied by the Brazilian fleet, continued slowly but steadily.

By December 1868 the Pikysyry line, supplied from Villeta, was held by about 12,000 Paraguayan troops with 85 guns; rather than attempting frontal attacks, Caxias then showed his talent. He shipped a strong part of his force across to the west bank; had them build a wooden "corduroy" road for some miles through the marshes to take them north; and on



Partial sketch map of the final Allied campaigns, December 1868–August 1869. Caxias's re-crossing of the Rio Paraguay to San Antonio (middle left) outflanked López's final fortified line further south, anchored on Angostura (bottom left). After landing on the east bank Caxias turned south, taking the Paraguayans in the rear; he then won a series of actions, typified by failed attempts by the Paraguayan Gen Bernardino Caballero to block water crossings while outnumbered 2-to-1. López fled the capital, at first to Cerro León (center), from where he launched his final hopeless attack at Lomas Valentinas. Thereafter, Count d'Eu pursued him around the highlands throughout 1869, initially using the railroad for re-supply. On December 28, 1869, by now a fugitive with only a few hundred ragged followers, López began his last retreat to the densely forested mountains of the northeast.

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December 4 he shipped them back to the east bank at San Antonio, well behind the Paraguayan defensive line. Caxias then turned his army south, defeating Gen Bernardino Caballero's much weaker Paraguayan forces in detail at Ytororó on the 6th and Avay on December 12. On December 24, López rejected the surrender terms offered by the Allies and fled to Cerro León. After another Allied victory at Ypacaraí on Christmas Day, López personally led 10,000 men against more than twice that many Allies in a hopeless attack at Lomas Valentinas (Yta-Ibate) on December 27.

On January 1, 1869 Brazilian troops entered Asunción, which was completely occupied on the 5th, and subjected to looting. Two weeks later Caxias resigned his command, ostensibly due to ill-health; he seems to have argued against expending more lives and funds pursuing López to the bitter end, but for Emperor Pedro II this was now a personal matter.

The 1869 Cordillera campaign: Peribebuy and Acosta Ñu

López withdrew into the hills to the southeast to continue the hopeless fight. He still commanded several thousand soldiers, but his core of elderly militiamen were greatly outnumbered by conscripted boys – all hungry, ragged, and short of every necessity. The new Brazilian commander was the emperor's French son-in-law, Prince Louis Philippe Gaston d'Orléans, Count d'Eu; he pursued López doggedly, with some 21,000 troops including a remaining Argentine contingent of about 2,000 under Col Luís Maria Campos.

A Paraguayan rearguard stood to fight on August 12, 1869 at Peribebuy, where some 1,800 men under LtCol Pedro Pablo Caballero were entrenched with 19 artillery pieces. Outnumbered about 10-to-1 by Gen Osório's Brazilian I Corps, Caballero refused a summons to surrender, and in the ensuing battle some 700 of his men were killed and the remainder taken prisoner. The Allies lost only 53 dead and 446 wounded, but among those mortally injured was a popular hero, BrigGen João Manuel Mena Barreto. A hospital full of Paraguayan wounded was burned down, and Count d'Eu had LtCol Caballero and the town mayor publicly beheaded.

Four days later, when López had already reached Caraguatay, the ever-loyal Gen Bernardino Caballero with some 6,000 Paraguayans – most of them boys – faced 20,000 Brazilian and Argentine troops at Acosta Ñu (Campo Grande). Firing the grass to create a smokescreen, Gen Caballero pulled his men back behind the Rio Juqueri. Supported by eight cannon, they held off an infantry attack, but were then ravaged by the Brazilian artillery and, despite forming a defensive square, were overrun by cavalry. After eight hours' fighting the Paraguayans had suffered 2,000

Original photograph showing Brazilian soldiers advancing in Paraguayan territory during the 1869–70 campaign. The terrain was harsh, slowing down all Allied movements, and the invaders' knowledge of the country was quite limited. The Paraguayans took advantage of this to employ guerrilla tactics, which gained them some local successes but by this time could not change the course of the war. Under magnification, visible features include "horseshoe" blanket rolls, large rear belt pouches, and some white-covered képis.

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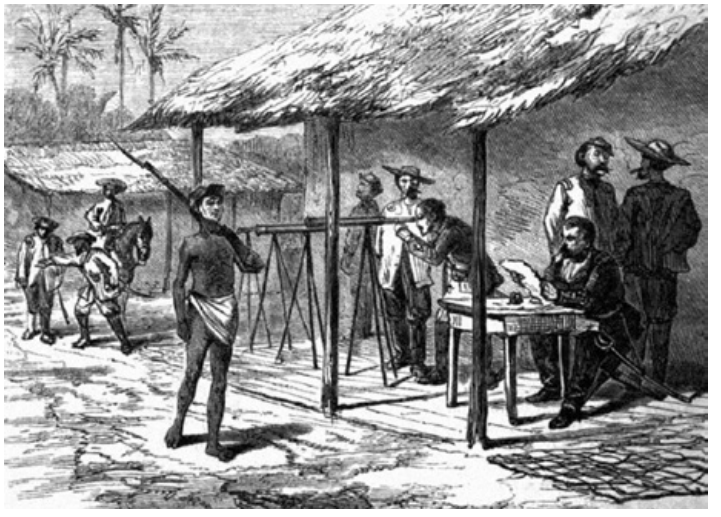

Artist's impression of the Paraguayan fugitives' camp in the northern Paraneña in early 1870, shortly before the death of López in the skirmish of Cerro Corá. Note the almost-naked sentry; by now the remaining loyalists were little more than a band of *guerrilleros* whose only aims were to find enough food to survive, and to avoid capture by the Brazilians.

casualties and 1,200 more were captured, along with the guns, in what was the last true battle of the war. Brazilian casualties in the battle totaled 305.

After a number of skirmishes, Brazilian troops finally caught up with López and his last 200-odd followers at Cerro Corá in the northeastern hills on March 1, 1870, while Gen Caballero was absent hunting for cattle to feed them. The camp was overrun, and the wounded dictator was left on a riverbank while his last aides tried to find help. There he was discovered by Brazilian troops led by Gen José Antônio da Câmara; offered a chance to surrender, López was killed by a lancer when he tried to attack Câmara with his sword. (An account records suitably defiant last words about "dying with my homeland." He had certainly ensured that most of its people had died before him; nevertheless, today López is remembered as a national hero.)

NAVAL OPERATIONS

In this theater of operations control of the main waterways was fundamental; roads were few and of poor quality, and the rivers were the only practical means for commerce and long-distance travel. Rivers such as the Paraguay and Paraña are immense by European standards, and provided both highways for military transport and formidable natural barriers to movement by land. Deep and wide, they were navigable by Brazil's ocean-going warships, but river movements were vulnerable to fire from shore batteries. Even small numbers of Paraguayans could effectively hamper any Allied river crossing, and major operations – such as the crossings of the Paraña in the second half of April 1866 – presented enormous logistic difficulties for the armies of the day. In defensive battles, such as Curupaytí, the Paraguayans exploited opportunities to anchor their defensive lines against rivers. It was only after the Paraguayan Navy had long ceased to offer a serious threat that Caxias was able to circumvent the final line, anchored on Angostura, by his imaginative "Pikysyry maneuver."

Paraguay's river fleet had been built up in the years before the war under the personal direction of both presidents López, to operate between the forts built along the major rivers. As the Triple Alliance would discover to its cost, the fleet strengthened Paraguay's ability to mount offensives, and, together with the forts, represented a formidable defensive system. The heart of this system was Humaitá; other Paraguayan river forts were constructed to similar designs, though to considerably smaller dimensions.

However, the Paraguayan Navy had only two real warships: the steam corvettes *Tacuarí* and *Paraguarí* (620 and 730 tons respectively; each

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2x 68-pdr and 6x 32-pdr guns). Its 16 other large vessels were converted merchant ships, but this little fleet was still decisive in the capture of the Argentine river-port city of Corrientes in April 1865. The navy also had a six-company battalion of marine infantry, and a company of naval artillery. Brazil, by contrast, had more than 40 warships with well-trained crews, the flagship being the 1,050-ton frigate *Amazonas* (1x 70-pdr and 5x 68-pdr guns). Most of these vessels were stationed in the southern reaches of the Rio de la Plata at the outbreak of war, but their commanders were accustomed to navigating deep into the interior, as far north as Cuyabá in the Mato Grosso. Brazil's strong corps of marines also proved decisive in some naval actions.

Battle of Riachuelo

This most important naval action of the war was fought on June 11, 1865. The Paraguayan fleet was composed of both corvettes, six other steamboats (150–650 tons, most with 4x 18-pdr guns), and seven *chatas* (towed wooden monitors, each with one heavy gun). Their opponents were two Brazilian naval "divisions," with the frigate *Amazonas*, four steam corvettes (all 600-plus tons, with 7x or 8x 68-pdrs and 32-pdrs), and four gunboats (70–100 tons, each with 5–7 guns).

The Paraguayans sailed down the Rio Paraguay from Humaitá into the Rio Paraña opposite Corrientes under cover of darkness and fog, intending to board the Brazilian ships anchored at the mouth of the Rio Riachuelo tributary while most of their crews were ashore. Despite additional artillery support from gun and rocket batteries on the bank, a last-minute change of plan by the Paraguayan Capt Pedro Ignácio Meza led to the near-destruction of his squadron. In a confused engagement the technological superiority of the Brazilian warships, and bold action in the crisis by Adm Barroso, led to the sinking of four Paraguayan steamers and all the *chatas*, plus the *Paraguarí* rammed and badly damaged, all for one Brazilian steam corvette lost.

This major defeat – the first of the conflict for Paraguay – gave the Allies strategic control of the waterways for the rest of the war, which was a decisive factor in their final victory. Seven new ironclads had been built in England for the Paraguayan Navy, but their delivery was impossible due to the Brazilian blockade, and they found their way into the Brazilian fleet as monitors. However, the Paraguayan Navy continued to fight minor actions, and employed both historic and

Contemporary artistic reconstruction of the battle of Riachuelo, June 11, 1865. The Paraguayan plan had been to surprise, board, and capture Brazilian warships at anchor while most of their crews and marines were ashore for the night. Inexplicably, the Paraguayan commander decided instead to steam past the anchorage shelling the enemy ships, which gave their crews time to board and get under way. Although command and control were confused on both sides, the Brazilians eventually sank four steamboats and seven wooden monitors for the loss of one of their own steam corvettes. Some historians argue that this was the decisive battle of the war, since it cost Paraguay the means to contest the vital control of the rivers during subsequent campaigns.

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At the end of the war, a Brazilian officer and soldiers (some wearing white-covered képis and white campaign trousers) look down into a courtyard filled with Paraguayan prisoners. The Paraguayans' motley appearance is typical of the last years of the war. Only one or two still have shakos, most wearing short-brimmed slouch hats. Half a dozen seem to have red blouses, and a couple of officers wear tunics; otherwise the prisoners have various civilian clothing, including (center left & center right) the traditional leather apron worn with or without a striped *chiripá.*

modern means such as fireships and mines. On March 2 and July 9, 1868 they made desperate attempts to capture Brazilian ships by boarding from canoes, but on both occasions they failed, and during the first attempt the *Tacuarí* was among the remaining Paraguayan vessels to be sunk. Brazilian naval dominance left all the Paraguayan river forts (and eventually Asunción itself) vulnerable to bombardment. The Allies were easily able to transport troops and supplies by water, while blockading Paraguay's supply routes and thus placing the whole country more or less under siege.

During its long years of civil wars Argentina had not had a navy, and the Paraguayan attack in 1865 found the country with just three warships, of which two were captured immediately when the Paraguayans occupied Corrientes. Numerous merchant vessels were used for transport and logistic support to the Brazilians, but never took part in engagements. A Uruguayan Navy of sorts was organized in 1860. During the conflict it deployed 18 vessels of various sizes, mainly transports, to support the Brazilian fleet, but again these were not involved in combat.

AFTERMATH

The consequences of defeat were disastrous for Paraguay. Brazilian troops would occupy the country until 1876, to extinguish any last embers of guerrilla resistance. Argentina and Brazil annexed about 54,000 square miles (140,000km^2) of Paraguayan territory – almost half the country. Initially the Argentine negotiators proposed to simply divide Paraguay between Argentina and Brazil, but the Brazilians refused, preferring to maintain a buffer state between themselves and their old rival. In 1876–1900 the depopulated country suffered much internal unrest amid a chronic economic crisis. Moreover, since only some 28,000 of the 160,000-odd surviving inhabitants were adult males, post-war Paraguay had a female-to-male imbalance of at least 4-to-1, and 20-to-1 in the most devastated areas. It would not be able to raise another regular army until the beginning of the 20th century.

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During the Brazilian occupation, many tensions between Brazil and Argentina threatened to spark an armed conflict. In Brazil the war had been ruinously expensive; it also exposed some of the internal problems of the Empire, and helped to bring about the abolition of slavery. The army gradually became the most influential force in political life, leading eventually to the deposition of Emperor Pedro II in 1889 and the birth of the new republic.

In the years following 1870 Argentina faced more civil wars and Federalist revolts, in which Mitre was involved. However, by the 1880s the country was stable under a centralized government – an outcome at least partly due to the experience of the Triple Alliance war, which had united the whole country against a common enemy. By the end of the century Argentina was the most prosperous nation in South America, with widespread overseas trade and a professional navy. The war also had fundamental effects in Uruguay; despite many other episodes of civil war in the years that followed, the "Colorados" faction managed to retain their control over the state until as late as 1958.

THE PARAGUAYAN ARMY

During his years as army commander, Francisco Solano López had increased its size by conscription, improved its training, and imported European military professionals to assist him in this program. By the time the war started in 1864 the Paraguayan Army was among the largest in South America, with a mobilized strength of about 31,000 – a large number by local standards. Although it lacked modern weapons its units were well trained, and its cavalry regiments were excellent.

Organization

The Paraguayan Army prior to general mobilization consisted of:
8 infantry battalions, numbered 1 to 8 (total: 4,084 men)
5 cavalry regiments, numbered 9 to 13 (total: 2,522 men)
2 artillery regiments, numbered 1 and 2 (total: 907 men)
After the first mobilization these totals increased to 19,375 infantry, 10,706 cavalry, and 1,053 artillerymen.

Each infantry battalion was supposed to have 800 men, each cavalry regiment 500, but infantry units rarely reached their establishment in practice. Several "special" units had greater strengths, such as the 1st Infantry Bn and the two elite cavalry regiments, the Acá Carayá and Acá Verá (which provided the presidential escort). Standard infantry battalions had seven companies: five of fusiliers (one a reserve company that was not deployed), one of grenadiers, and one of light infantry. Cavalry regiments were composed of three squadrons, each with two or three companies.

From March 1865, with the expansion of military operations and with Paraguay soon to face "total war" against the Triple Alliance, another six infantry battalions and eight cavalry regiments were recruited, bringing the regular army up to 40,000 troops of whom 20,000 were cavalry. The newly raised battalions each had six companies,

This cavalry officer wears a rare example of a Paraguayan uniform with decorative embellishments; it is probably a parade dress dating from before or early in the war. Colors: black shako with bottom band in national colors (red, over white, over blue) and a white-metal badge; red jacket with black edging to collar, black chest cords and sleeve lace; dark blue overall trousers with double red stripes; white leather pouch- and sword belts and sword-knot; black leather boots. (Drawing by Benedetto Esposito)

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of which four were designated grenadiers and two light infantry. This organization was maintained until the end of the war. Due to the nature of its territory and the traditional lifestyle of the inhabitants, no other army in South America had such a numerous cavalry as Paraguay. The Guaraní Indian population, many of whom played an active part in the war, were skilled horsemen, and since Spanish colonial days there had always been a high concentration of mounted troops in Paraguay. After independence the first dictator had reduced their numbers, but during the rule of the López family they were increased once more.

One of the Paraguayan Army's greatest handicaps was a general lack of expert officers. Military coups by rebel officers were endemic in Latin America, and the previous dictators had considered a competent officer corps to be a potential threat to their grip on power. In order to avoid any possibility of this, President Francia had eliminated an entire group of ex-colonial professional officers, and reduced the total number of officers in the army to a few dozen loyal incompetents. This policy was maintained by the two presidents López, so that the army started the Triple Alliance war not only with too few and too junior officers, but without a coherent command system – Francisco Solano López kept all decision-making exclusively to himself. Even so, officers were also repeatedly transferred between units to prevent the development of any ties of loyalty with their troops. Throughout the war the Paraguayan rank-and-file suffered greatly from a lack of leadership, and in the field this was very often provided by veteran sergeants.

LEFT Paraguayan infantryman, 1869, typical of the appearance of the few veteran soldiers still fighting in the last two years of the war. Colors: low black cap with national-colored cockade (blue, white, red center) and bottom band (from top down: red, white, blue); short red jacket; white rolled-up trousers; white leather belts.

RIGHT Paraguayan militia infantryman, 1868, wearing the most common campaign dress of the militia units. Colors: black shako with bottom band in national colors, and vertical stripes of the same (from left to right: blue, white, red); red blouse; blue *chiripá* kilt with red and narrower black stripes; black leather waist belt, ammunition pouch, and bayonet scabbard. In both cases the weapon is probably an 1842 "Tower" smoothbore musket. (Drawings by Benedetto Esposito)

Militia

Paraguay had no organized National Guard, but a "general" militia potentially composed of all the country's able-bodied men. The initial age limits were soon forgotten, and by the end of the war the militia consisted entirely of young boys around a core of elderly veterans. Officially it followed the regular troops in organization, tactical training, and uniforms, but in fact it was very short of all these. Its battlefield value was limited, especially in 1868–70.

Tactics and performance

A few months before the war, López had assembled

(Continued on page 33)

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BRAZILIAN CAVALRY

1: Trooper, 1st Line Cavalry Regt, 1868

2: *Caçador,* Mounted Caçadores, 1869

3: *Gaucho,* Nat Gd Cavalry of Rio Grande do Sul, 1865

D

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BRAZILIAN NATIONAL GUARD & VOLUNTEER INFANTRY, 1865

1: Volunteer, 48th Volunteer Battalion

2: Sergeant, 13th Volunteer Battalion

3: Zouave, *Zuavos da Bahia*

4: Fusilier, National Guard

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ARGENTINE CAVALRY
1: Trooper, regular cavalry; service dress, 1865
2: Trooper, Nat Gd Cavalry of Buenos Aires, 1867
3: Trooper, regular cavalry; campaign dress, 1866
1
2
3

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all his forces at a large camp at Cerro León for a period of intensive training. This was very necessary, since it was the first time the army had ever been concentrated or had an opportunity to practice coordination between the different units.

The tactics used by the Paraguayans were dangerously simple: every hope of victory rested upon the success of the cavalry charge that usually opened a battle. The Paraguayan commanders were certain of the superiority of their mounted troops, who were usually committed first for this reason. At the two battles of Tuyutí the Paraguayans attacked with strong cavalry columns, but these were defeated by the Allied infantry; the latter formed large defensive squares, resisting the charges and inflicting heavy losses on the Paraguayans. This experience was repeated in many of the actions during the first and second phases of the war, when the Allies were always able to hold their positions against Paraguayan attacks.

Despite the secondary role allotted to the Paraguayan infantry, it was they who gave the best account of themselves in some of the most notable battles. As at Curupaytí, given strong defensive positions and a sensible plan they defended their lines stoutly and inflicted many casualties, especially among Allied officers. In the last phase of the war the desperate defense of Paraguayan territory was mainly conducted by heavily outnumbered militiamen, with few appreciable results, and the Paraguayans were far less able to sustain heavy casualties than the much more numerous Allies. Some local successes were later achieved by using guerrilla tactics in the wild terrain of the eastern hills, but these were irrelevant to the outcome of the conflict.

Weapons

It is generally considered that the lack of modern rifles was one of the most important causes of Paraguay's defeat, since its soldiers usually had only (at best) percussion-lock smoothbores with which to confront the longer-ranged and more accurate weapons of the Allies. Muskets and carbines were imported, and while there was no standard model the most common was the British 1842-pattern "Tower" musket, a modified "Brown Bess," of which 20,000 had been bought by López's father as surplus from Brazil after 1852. The cavalry generally had old Tower carbines, except for the elite Acá Carayá Regt, which had 250 rifled, breech-loading Turner carbines. Significant numbers of more modern captured Allied weapons were re-used, but in the late guerrilla phase of the conflict Paraguayans pressed into service anything that was available, including old flintlocks. Simple patterns of sabers and lances were locally produced. Some cannon were cast locally; the artillery used older and heavier pieces for garrisons, but the majority were small-caliber horse-drawn guns for campaign service. These were highly mobile, and frequently acted in close coordination with the cavalry. Rocket-launchers are also mentioned at several actions, and these were presumably locally manufactured Congreve and/or Hales weapons as also used by the Brazilians.

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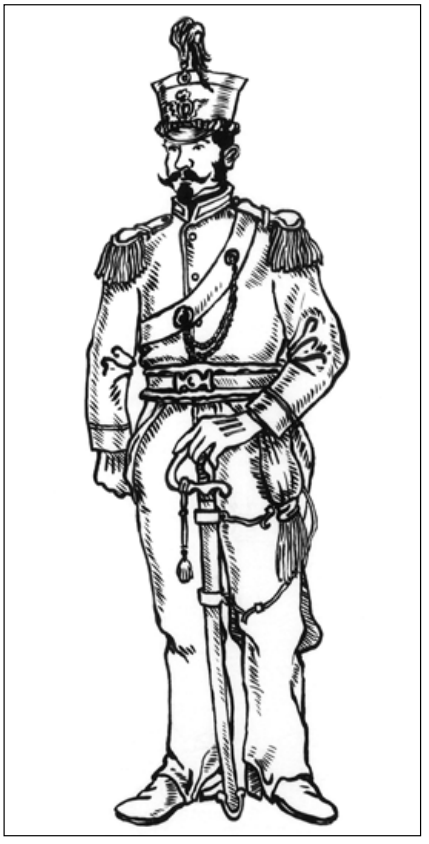
THE BRAZILIAN ARMY

At the outbreak of war the Brazilian army and navy were the most professional of their respective forces in South America. Nevertheless, in size, composition, and quality, the army that achieved the occupation of Paraguay by 1870 was very different from that which had invaded Uruguay in 1864, and its general standards had greatly improved during six years of war. The army of 1864 was still organized according to the contemporary Portuguese model, and the strong influence of the former colonial ruler was visible in its uniforms. This influence partly endured until the creation of the Brazilian republic in 1889 cut the final links with the royal family of Portugal, and in that year the army adopted Prussian-style uniforms.

The elegant uniform of a Brazilian cavalry officer, 1864. Colors: black shako with gilt plate and chinscales, gold lace top band, national cockade (green, yellow, blue center), and red feather plumes; dark blue coatee with red collar and cuffs, piped white around the collar, cuffs and down the front; white turnbacks; gold lace epaulets; dark blue overall trousers with single red side-stripes; crimson waist sash with gold knot and crimson tassels; white leather belts with gilt fittings; gold cord sword-knot. (Drawing by Benedetto Esposito)



Organization

The army mobilized for the Triple Alliance war was divided into three main categories: the regular troops, the National Guard, and the Volunteer corps. In 1864 the regular army consisted of:

14 infantry battalions, numbered 1 to 14. Nos 1–7 were of *fusileiros* (line infantry) and Nos 8–14 were of *caçadores* (light infantry), for a total of 6,174 fusileiros and 3,312 caçadores.

5 cavalry regiments, numbered 1 to 5 (total: 3,090 men)

4 battalions of foot artillery, numbered 1 to 4 (total: 2,228 men)

4 companies of horse artillery, numbered 1 to 4 (total: 557 men)

Each battalion of fusileiros had eight companies, and each caçadores battalion six companies. A cavalry regiment had three companies, and each foot artillery battalion eight companies. There were also a battalion of engineers and an artificer corps, and a squadron of the supply train was formed in 1865. All these support services were rudimentary, having too few men, inadequate equipment and training, and poor organization. Nevertheless, they were the best of their kind in South America at that time.

In addition to this regular army, with a total of some 17,000 men, many small units designated as garrison or "fixed" corps were stationed in the various provinces to perform police and customs duties and provide escorts for officials, as well as forming a first line of defense. These local forces had few links with the rest of the army, and were known by a variety of names, e.g. *Pedestres, Ligeiros*, and *Caçadores de Montanha*. During the 1850s the government had started a reform process to increase their professionalism and transform them into auxiliary corps under regular army control, with the result that in the first months of the war some of these units performed well when confronting the advancing Paraguayans. When the war was declared these "fixed corps" were officially abolished and absorbed into the regular army, the foot units usually being designated as caçadores. They provided a lot of manpower for the subsequent expansion of the army that followed almost immediately.

During the war there were some changes to the organization of the regular army. The 4th and 5th Cavalry Regts were

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broken up to create five new units of Mounted Caçadores, each of 638 men in four companies. This was a response to the need for new light cavalry units able to fight both mounted and on foot, having the mobility of cavalry but the skills of light infantry. Their abilities as scouts and skirmishers soon made them the best Brazilian troops for campaigning in harsh terrain. Other changes to the order of battle were the creation of a fifth battalion of foot artillery, and a second provisional unit of horse artillery.

While the structure of the regular army otherwise remained more or less the same for the rest of the war, the other two categories of troops expanded rapidly and constantly during the conflict, and soon became more numerous than the regulars.

The National Guard

This was the largest source of military manpower during the war, and the quality of its soldiers was generally good. Units of infantry, cavalry, and artillery were recruited in the various provinces of the country. There were no separate units of caçadores, but usually every National Guard infantry battalion had two light companies. Some units were raised directly by the central government; known as battalions "of the Court," these received better equipment and training.

Completely reorganized in 1851, by 1865 the National Guard was able to deploy 14,796 men, but it had one serious limitation. Brazilian law only permitted the combat employment of National Guard units raised by those provinces that were directly in the theater of operations – so in practice, only those units raised in Mato Grosso and Rio Grande do Sul.

LEFT Foot artilleryman, campaign dress, 1865. Brazilian artillery uniforms usually followed the general pattern for the infantry, but with crimson-red distinctions instead of infantry scarlet-red. Colors: barracks cap with white top and dark blue turn-up "turban" piped crimson, crimson tassel, and national cockade (green, yellow, blue center); pale cream jacket, piped crimson at shoulder-straps, cuffs, and down the front; collar with large crimson front patches and upper edging; black cuff flaps piped all round in crimson; white trousers; white leather belts; black backpack and blanket roll.

RIGHT Horse artillery sergeant, 1866. This campaign uniform was used by both the horse artillery and the cavalry. Colors: white-covered képi; white duck jacket; collar with crimson patches and edging; crimson cuff flaps; crimson piping to front and cuffs; brass contre-epaulets; three crimson diagonal rank stripes around left sleeve only; white trousers; black boots; crimson waist sash; black leather belts with brass fittings; black sword-knot; dark blue rolled cloak. (Drawings by Benedetto Esposito)

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Fine studio portrait of a Volunteer corporal in campaign dress; for colors, compare with Plate E4. Note the diagonal rank lace around the left sleeve (probably red).

Despite this formal limitation, however, Rio Grande do Sul alone mobilized a total of 43,500 soldiers during the war.

The duties of the National Guard included policing, services behind the lines, and relief of regular troops from garrison and escort duties; but their most important wartime function was as a source of replacements, with some degree of training and experience, for the regular army. Uniforms initially followed regular army patterns, but as the conflict continued the National Guard received the same campaign dress as the Volunteers for the Fatherland.

The *Voluntários da Pátria*

As a result of the law that limited the deployments of the National Guard, the government had to issue a call for volunteers to reinforce the army in the field. Thousands of men responded from every province of the Empire, and were organized in infantry units known as *Voluntários da Pátria*; in all, 55 such units were formed. The government promised all volunteers a grant of land on demobilization, and this was the main motivation for enlisting. As the war progressed the number of new volunteers dwindled, and recruiters were obliged to enlist large numbers of immigrants, ne'er-do-wells, criminals, and ex-slaves. Many slaves were recruited on the promise of being freed at the end of the war; a slave was often sent by his master to take the place of one of the latter's relatives, and some were simply sold to the government. The officers were still mainly volunteers, who enlisted for the promise of land or to improve their social status.

LEFT Sergeant, 11th Volunteer Bn, 1865. Initially this unit had one of the most elegant parade uniforms among the *Voluntários da Pátria*, though it is unlikely that it was worn on the field of battle. Colors: blue peaked cap with yellow lace tassel and brass unit badge; medium blue jacket with red cuff flaps; brass unit number on collar; yellow piping to collar and cuff flaps; yellow rank stripes on left sleeve only; medium blue trousers; red waist sash; black leather belt.

RIGHT Volunteer, 33rd Volunteer Bn, 1866. This ex-slave volunteer wears a white-covered képi with brass unit number; dark blue jacket with red shoulder-straps and collar patches; white leather belts and straps; black backpack with dark blue blanket roll. (Drawings by Benedetto Esposito)

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Volunteer units were usually of mixed black and white composition, but some entirely black units were formed, especially in the province of Bahia where slaves were very numerous. The quality of the Volunteer units was very diverse: some were excellent, and, brigaded with regular units (see above, "Orders of battle, First Battle of Tuyutí"), earned a good reputation at Tuyutí and Curupaytí; others were of little combat value, and were employed for auxiliary duties. The weapons issued to them were initially quite varied, but by the end of the war almost all Volunteer units had received the same rifles as the regulars. The part played by Volunteer units in the war was fundamental for Brazil and the Allies; it was mainly thanks to them and the National Guard that the Brazilians were always able to deploy superior numbers on the battlefield.

Brazilian cavalryman of the Mato Grosso provincial troops, one of the "fixed corps" of garrison troops that played an important role in 1864 but which were soon absorbed into the regular army. Their uniforms were often elegant, and some were modeled (though not in this case) on the green parade dress of the Caçadores. Colors: black shako with brass plate, yellow top band, and red plume; dark blue jacket with red collar, cuff flaps, and piping; two white lace bars on collar; brass shoulder-scales; dark blue overall trousers; white leather belts and sword-knot; black sabertache. (Drawing by Benedetto Esposito)

Tactics and performance

The Brazilian armed forces generally performed quite well during the war, and they fought the engagements of 1867–70 usually without significant support from Argentina or Uruguay. The Brazilian regulars were always the core of the Allied army – a nucleus of well-trained and well-equipped troops on whom commanders could rely in difficult situations, and who determined the outcome of the major battles. In general terms, the Brazilian infantry were better in the attack than the other Allied soldiers, who usually preferred defensive tactics such as the infantry square. The Brazilian cavalry were probably the only Allied mounted units who were able to confront Paraguayan horsemen on anything like equal terms. Until the Triple Alliance war the artillery and other technical corps were still considered minor branches of service, but this conflict gave them the opportunity to acquire experience and a good reputation. The horse artillery improved markedly during the war, achieving a superior mobility that became a determining factor in battle.

Weapons

The Brazilians enjoyed more commonality of weapons than the other three armies. The standard line infantry weapon was the excellent Pattern 1853 Enfield percussion rifle, of which thousands had been purchased from Britain shortly before the war. An attempt to introduce the German Dreyse breech-loader for the caçadores soon failed as a result of poor performance in the field, and the caçadores units (both foot and mounted) also received the Enfield. The cavalry replaced their old single-shot percussion carbines with new repeating Spencers in 1867. The Brazilian horse artillery was largely recruited in the province of Rio Grande do Sul and had a distinctly *gaucho* ("cowboy") tradition, using small but efficient pieces. The heavier guns of the foot artillery were among the best in South America; coming from various European sources, they included French rifled muzzle-loading La Hitte M1858/59 guns. In addition, locally manufactured Congreve and Hales rockets were used.

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THE ARGENTINE ARMY

Organization

The Argentine Army of 1865 was small, poorly trained, and badly equipped. President Mitre, a general whose power rested with the army, was well aware that it was quite inadequate for a confrontation with either Paraguay or Brazil. When he was forced to abandon his neutral stance, his choice to ally his country with its traditional rival Brazil was probably made largely because of Argentina's military weakness. The Argentine Army in 1865 consisted of:

6 infantry battalions, numbered 1 to 6, plus one known as the *Legión Militar* (total: 2,800 men)
8 cavalry regiments, numbered 1 to 8 (total: 3,200 men)
1 artillery regiment (400 men)

Each infantry battalion had 400 men in five 80-strong companies; three were of fusiliers, one of grenadiers, and one of *cazadores* (light infantry). The cavalry regiments were divided into two squadrons, each of two companies.

By August 1865 the army had completed its expansion, with 11 infantry battalions plus two newly raised "Legions of Volunteers" based on the model of the Brazilian *Voluntários da Pátria*. Each regular battalion was increased to six 80-man companies, giving the regular infantry a total of 5,280 soldiers.

The National Guard

At the declaration of war on April 16, 1865 the Argentine regular army had a total of 6,000 men, compared with the 31,000 mobilized by Paraguay and Brazil's 17,000 well-trained regulars. To expand the army rapidly, the government mobilized the entire National Guard and absorbed it into the regular forces, forming the so-called "National Army on Campaign." This should have had 19 infantry battalions each 500 strong. A law of June 5, 1865 made two years' service in the National Guard obligatory for all married men aged 17–45 and for bachelors aged 17–50. After complete mobilization and the expansion of the regulars the National Army on Campaign finally reached the planned number of 25,000 soldiers, of whom 10,000 were regulars and 15,000 National Guardsmen. The majority of the army's mounted units came from the National Guard.

National Guard units were raised in all the provinces of Argentina, but their size varied depending on the wealth and population of the province of origin. The governor of Corrientes, being under direct attack by Paraguay, soon organized new volunteer units: eight cavalry regiments, three "legions" of infantry, an infantry battalion, and various militia units. All the surviving infantry were eventually unified to form the 1st Corrientes Bn of the National Guard (see Plate F4).

Tactics and performance

The Argentine Army operated under great difficulties during the first months of the war; it was unprepared, and mostly hundreds of miles to the south, when the northern province of Corrientes was invaded by the Paraguayans in a matter of days. The disastrous loss of Corrientes city left

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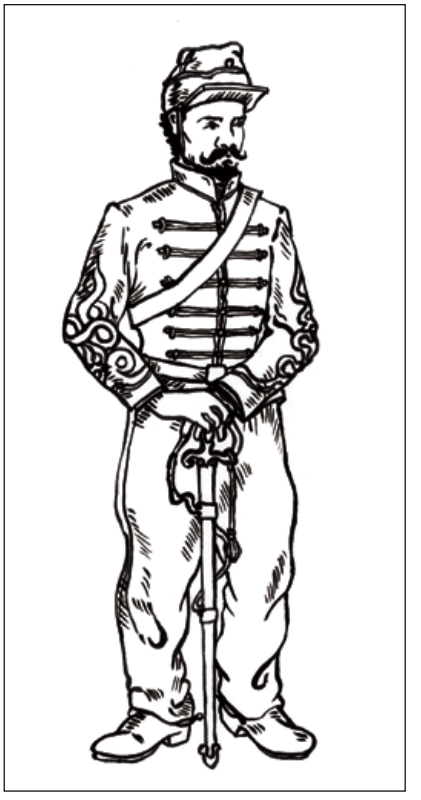

LEFT Argentine infantry officer, 1865. These "Carlist"-style uniforms, modeled on those of rebels in Spain, were very popular among officers of the Argentine and Uruguayan armies, and Argentine officers frequently wore privately purchased clothing that did not follow official regulations. Colors: broad red cap with silver lace tassel; dark blue frock-coat with red collar and cuffs; gold lace rank knots on sleeves; blue waistcoat; red sash; loose red trousers with double blue stripes; gold lace sword-knot.

RIGHT Cavalry officer, 1866. This elegant campaign uniform, very popular among Argentine cavalry officers, was modeled on the contemporary dress of the French light cavalry. Colors: képi with blue crown, white band, gold lace, and national cockade (bright blue, white, bright blue); dark blue jacket with white collar and cuffs; gold piping and sleeve knots; black chest frogging with gold toggles; dark blue trousers with single white stripe; white leather belts and sword-knot. (Drawings by Benedetto Esposito)

Argentina with only small numbers of regular troops to resist further Paraguayan advances from the northern borders. Mitre's solution was the massive use of the National Guard, both as a source of reinforcements to enlarge the regular army and as autonomous units. However, the National Guard was composed of men with only superficial training and no military experience, and the quality of its units was very diverse. The National Guard cavalry of Buenos Aires and the infantry battalion of Corrientes were among the best units in the army, but others had high rates of desertion and were never directly employed in the theater of operations.

Analysis of their performance shows that the Argentine troops fought particularly well in the two major pitched battles of Tuyutí and Curupaytí. At Tuyutí, the Argentine infantry had to sustain massive charges by the Paraguayan cavalry; after an initial hesitation under the first impact the infantry formed defensive squares, and, well supported by the artillery, held their ground. The squares delivered accurate fire, and none of them were broken. Despite this success, the Argentine infantry were for a time in no condition to go over to the attack, and new charges by Paraguayan follow-up units fell on their front line. It was at this moment of the battle that the Argentine cavalry attacked. Their charges repulsed the last Paraguayan attempts, and initiated a general counterattack by the entire Allied army which obliged the Paraguayans to fall back to their start-lines after having lost thousands of their best soldiers.

At Curupaytí the situation was very different: the Allied attack against the Paraguayan positions was badly planned and failure was inevitable.

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LEFT Officer of the 1st Volunteer Legion, 1866. This was one of the two Argentine battalions whose officers wore zouave dress; the rankers' uniform was similar to Plate E1. The two Volunteer Legions were mainly raised in the Bora neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, which had many Italian immigrants amoung the inhabitants. Colors: white-covered képi; red jacket with blue collar and cuffs; gold edge-piping, and shoulder-loops for epaulets; gold sleeve knots; black chest frogging with gold toggles; blue loose-cut trousers with single red stripe; white sword-knot.

RIGHT Infantryman, National Guard Bn of San Nicolas, 1867. The typically simple uniforms of the National Guard infantry usually followed line infantry style, with some minor changes. This battalion had uniforms made of gray and sky-blue surplus cloth bought from the United States. Colors: white-covered képi; dark gray jacket with sky-blue collar and cuffs; sky-blue trousers with single white stripe; black leather belts; white canvas haversack; blue blanket roll around backpack. (Drawings by Benedetto Esposito)

Losses were highest in the Argentine sector; here the Paraguayan second-line defenses were strongest, yet the Argentine soldiers stubbornly attacked them many times before finally falling back. Many acts of heroism were recorded in the Argentine ranks, and their courage was an example to the entire Allied army. Nevertheless, the morale of the Argentine contingent deteriorated after this battle, and Mitre was blamed for the defeat. After Mitre's resignation supreme command of the army passed to the Brazilians, and Argentine participation in the war became more limited, due both to the reduced numbers of its troops and to a general lack of enthusiasm. The Triple Alliance war was understood in both Argentina and Uruguay as a defensive effort against the menace of Paraguayan invasion. When this was no longer perceived as a genuine threat a strong pacifist movement developed in both countries, thus encouraging a reduced participation in the last phases of the conflict.

Weapons

In 1865 the Argentine Army was equipped with a wide variety of muskets and rifles. Napoleonic-era "Brown Bess" flintlock muskets and carbines were very numerous; widely known as "Tower" muskets from their Tower of London arsenal marks, they were especially common among the National Guard. Gradually, percussion rifles of the French 1842 series became the standard infantry weapon. The cavalry had, among many other weapons, Enfield 1842/51 musketoons. The Argentine artillery used field guns obtained from a variety of suppliers including Whitworth, Krupp, and Hotchkiss.

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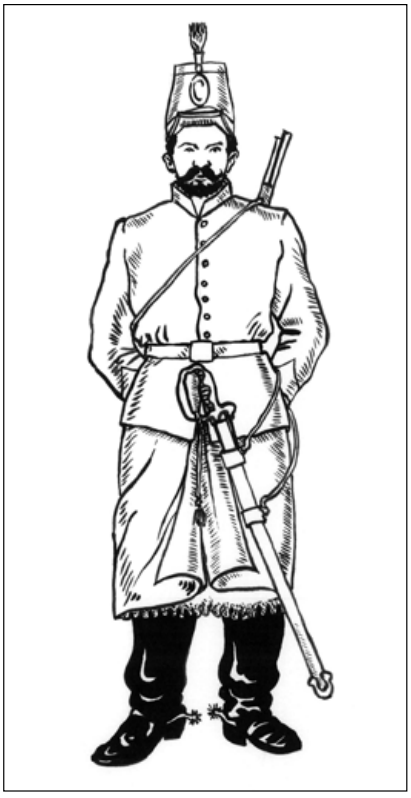

LEFT Cavalryman of the Escort to President Mitre, 1865. This unit, created to protect the commander-in-chief of the Allied forces and Argentine president, had a more ornate parade dress; this campaign uniform shows elements from the traditional *gaucho* costume. Colors: black shako with red plume and brass plate; dark blue jacket with red collar and pointed cuffs; red *chiripá* worn over white lace *calzoncillos*; white leather belt and sword-knot.

RIGHT Trooper, Guides of San Juan province, 1865. Many small volunteer cavalry units were raised in the Argentine provinces at the beginning of the war, wearing very diverse uniforms. This squadron acted as guides for the advancing Allied troops. Colors: black shako with black side-chevrons, brass plate, and national cockade (bright blue, white, bright blue); entirely white lancer-style jacket with brass buttons; dark blue trousers; white leather belts and sword-knot. (Drawings by Benedetto Esposito)

THE URUGUAYAN ARMY

Organization

Although this contingent was the smallest in the Triple Alliance, the Uruguayan infantry battalions fought very well during the first phase of the conflict, and President Venancio Flores proved to be an excellent commander. However, after many years of civil wars that only ended in 1865 the republic's manpower was quite limited, and the army's total strength was about 3,250 officers and men. Its composition was as follows:

4 infantry battalions, named *Florida, 24 de Abril, Voluntarios de la Libertad*, and *Independencia* (total: 1,800 men)

3 National Guard cavalry regiments, numbered 1–3 (total: 703 men), plus the presidential mounted escort (294 men)

2 squadrons of horse artillery, numbered 1 & 2 (approximately 450 men)

Three of the infantry battalions each had six companies: four of fusiliers, one of grenadiers, and one of cazadores. The exception was the *Florida* Bn, the oldest unit and the core of the army, which had six fusilier companies. Cavalry and horse artillery were organized similarly to the Argentine mounted troops.

Tactics and performance

The Uruguayan battalions were mainly composed of veterans of the civil wars, and performed very well during the initial battles. They had a reputation as bitter fighters, especially the soldiers of the *Florida* Bn,

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LEFT Uruguayan infantry officer, Infantry Battalion *Voluntarios de la Libertad*, 1865. The officers and men of this unit wore a "Carlist" uniform in two different patterns (see also Plate H3), but this officer's privately purchased version is more elaborate than was usual. Colors: large, bag-like round white cap with gold lace tassel; dark blue jacket with black edging and gold lace frogging; crimson trousers with black stripes; black leather belt and revolver holster; gold lace sword-knot.

RIGHT Infantry officer, Infantry Battalion *Florida*, 1865. Again, this officer has provided himself with a uniform designed to his personal taste, as was common; in this case the inspiration is clearly French. Colors: képi with dark blue top, crimson band, and gold rank lace (as Plate H4); dark blue jacket with green cuffs and collar; crimson piping to collar, cuffs, and edges; gold foliate collar decorations; gold lace epaulet loops and rank knots on sleeves; gold buttons with black cord loops; crimson trousers with green stripes; black leather waist belt and holster; gold sword-knot. (Drawings by Benedetto Esposito)

which was considered to be among the best of all Allied units. Also notable was the *Voluntarios de la Libertad* Bn, initially known as *Voluntarios Garibaldinos* (in 1846 Giuseppe Garibaldi had played an important part in the Uruguayan civil war, and he is still remembered as a national hero). In general terms, the Uruguayan forces performed well on the battlefield. The few artillery pieces were precise in their fire, and the infantry battalions were good at holding their positions, defensive tactics usually being preferred during pitched battles. The Uruguayan contingent also had experience in siege operations. The cavalry was rarely employed, and its quality was not comparable to that of the Argentine National Guard units.

After Curupaytí, the Uruguayan contingent was greatly reduced in size, and it had left the Allied army by the beginning of 1868.

Weapons

The Uruguayan Army's weapons presented a confused picture, as a result of decades of political instability and the consequent acquisition of various arms from Brazil, Argentina, and Europe. At the beginning of the war flintlock muskets were still quite common, but the Pattern 1853 Enfield percussion rifle, supplied by Brazil, gradually became standard for the infantry. The cavalry used many different carbines, the Spanish M1855 being common. Lefaucheux handguns were very popular among Uruguayan officers. The artillery had only pieces of small caliber, from the same suppliers as the Argentines.

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Brazilian officers from a line cavalry unit wearing their campaign uniforms (compare with Plate D1). Brazilian officers followed official dress regulations more closely than their Argentine or Uruguayan colleagues, but every individual wore whatever he preferred on campaign. Photos were considered an "official" occasion, for which regulation dress was usually worn. Note at rear right the mixed-race trumpeter.

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PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: PARAGUAYAN FOOT TROOPS

The uniforms of the Paraguayan infantry and artillery were simple in style, with no clear distinction between the two branches. These soldiers have a more or less "regular" appearance, typical of 1864–65; as the conflict progressed to the Allied invasion and the Brazilian river blockade, common soldiers were lucky to have a single uniform item such as a shako or a red shirt. Weaponry was also affected by the blockade: by the end of the war the most common weapons were flintlock muskets or even pikes. The uniforms on this and the next plate are reconstructed after contemporary drawings and paintings; these are the only sources we have, since no official Paraguayan records survive from this period. In the background of this plate is a typical Guaraní Indian house.

A1: Infantryman, 1865

This red single-breasted coat and white trousers were worn by the Paraguayan infantry before and at the beginning of the war. The blue képi is unusual; rank-and-file usually wore the shako, as in A2 and A4, and képis were normally worn only by officers. The old-fashioned crossbelts support a cartridge pouch behind the right hip and a bayonet scabbard behind the left. Note the absence of a percussion-cap pouch on the waist belt, despite the fact that the weapon is a British 1842 "Tower" musket. This percussion-lock conversion of the old "Brown Bess" had a .753in caliber smoothbore barrel 39in (1m) long, and measured 6ft (1.83m) long overall with bayonet fixed; it was only marginally accurate at 150 yards' (137m) range.

A2: Infantryman, 1866

This soldier wears the standard campaign uniform widely used throughout the war on every front. The black shako is painted with a bottom band in the national colors of blue, white, and red, and in this case displays a painted motif showing the same colors. The red pullover blouse has a black collar, cuffs, and front placket strip under the buttons. The lightweight white trousers were the almost universal dress of the poor throughout Latin America, and most Paraguayan soldiers had no shoes. The equipment is reduced to a single crossbelt, and note the cap pouch on the waist belt.

A3: Infantry officer, 1865

The officers' campaign uniform was completely different from that of their men. Of medium blue, it was of conventional single-breasted frock-coat cut, with a red standing collar, gilt buttons including four at the rear seam of the sleeves, and gilt shoulder bars. The képi has gold rank lace and quarter-piping. The saber has a brass scabbard.

A4: Gunner, Horse Artillery, 1867

The majority of Paraguayan artillery troops were mounted, and had the same equipment as the cavalry. This soldier has a shako with a national cockade, and the same blouse as A2, but here worn under a traditional *chiripá* (a striped blanket worn like a kilt) and a leather protective apron. He is armed with a cavalry saber and a slung "Tower" carbine, and has a single crossbelt for the cartridge pouch. This is a notably well-equipped soldier; in mid-1867 a correspondent was already describing Paraguayan troops around Humaitá as being mostly dressed only in a shirt and leather apron, though all with "clumsy looking leather caps."

B: PARAGUAYAN CAVALRY

The horsemanship, mobility, and dash of the Paraguayan cavalry were unmatched by any Allied mounted regiments, and because of their good reputation they were employed as shock troops in the major pitched battles. When operations later degenerated into guerrilla warfare, the reduced but still valuable Paraguayan cavalry were a source of constant danger for the advancing Allies. Cavalry uniforms had elements of traditional Guaraní Indian costume, such as the *chiripá*, which was very popular for its comfort. A traditional native weapon that was also in use was the set of *bolas* that were thrown to entangle the legs of the enemy's horses.

B1: Cavalryman, 1865

This simple campaign uniform was worn at the start of the war: straw hat with a red band, red jacket, and white trousers (though on campaign it was rare to see trousers worn in preference to the *chiripá*). Note the unusual lance-head, of the type used by the gauchos when herding cattle.

B2: Militia cavalryman, 1867

The national militia raised by the López government played an increasingly important part as the war progressed. This cavalryman during the middle years of the war wears a regular soldier's shako and red blouse with black trim, but with the *chiripá* over the gaucho's lace-decorated white linen trousers *(calzoncillos).* He would also have large steel rowel spurs, obscured here, strapped over his espadrilles, and a cavalry saber. His other weapons are a "Tower" carbine, a lance with a conventional head and a pennant in national colors, and, hanging at his waist, the triple *bolas.*

B3: Trooper, Cavalry Regiment *Acá Verá*, 1866

The Acá Verá and Acá Carayá were the elite units of the Paraguayan cavalry which provided the presidential guard for President Francisco Solano López, and they had distinctive uniforms. The names meant, respectively, 'Golden Heads' and 'Monkey Heads.' The Acá Verá Regt used a special bell-topped shako with gold lace bands; a red blouse with additional black trim on the shoulders and upwards-pointing pocket flaps; and white trousers under a small *chiripá* and leather apron. The crossbelt supported an ammunition pouch for the "Turner"-type percussion carbine (the name refers not to a manufacturer, but to a rare class of US weapons made by German gunsmiths), which are known to have been issued to the Acá Carayá Regt, but were probably also used by the Acá Verá when escorting President López. Note, again, the *bolas*. The Acá Carayá wore a helmet trimmed with a monkey-tail.

C: BRAZILIAN INFANTRY

Before the war, Imperial Brazilian Army uniforms were very similar to those of the contemporary Portuguese Army, particularly in the infantry. The realities of a war fought in harsh terrain obliged the government to introduce two more practical campaign uniforms: one was summer/tropical, made of white duck, and the other a fatigue dress of light brown duck or sailcloth. These were the first examples of specific field uniforms being issued by a South American army. Brazilian foot artillery uniforms followed the pattern of the line infantry, and horse artillery uniforms the cavalry pattern. All the figures on Plates C to E inclusive are reconstructed, with acknowledgement, after the works of Rodrigues, the greatest authority on Brazilian uniformology.

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C1: *Caçador*, 1865
The light infantry's smart dark green prewar uniform differed from the Portuguese original mainly in its color, since Portuguese Caçadores were dressed in brown. This general pattern was followed by all the many volunteer caçadores units formed throughout Brazil during the war. Note the bronze Maltese cross shako plate. All leather equipment is black, and the caçador is armed with a Pattern 1853 Enfield percussion rifle with its lock-on socket bayonet.

C2: Fusilier, 1866
This variant of everyday uniform was used as campaign dress by the line infantry. A dark blue barracks cap replaces the shako, and he has a slung water-bottle and canvas haversack. Note the collar patches and upper edging, and the piping of the shoulder-straps, cuffs, cuff flaps, and front edge. The distinctive piping for the line infantry was scarlet-red, that of the similar foot artillery uniforms crimson-red. Again, the rifle is a Pattern 1853 Enfield.

C3: Infantry officer, 1867
During operations in Paraguayan territory, Brazilian officers used a variety of frequently unregulated campaign uniforms. These generally consisted of a blue jacket with gold rank rings around the cuffs, and white trousers, but in the hottest months entirely white uniforms were generally used. Note the white cotton cover over the képi.

C4: *Caçador,* 1868
This is the new fatigue uniform of 'light brown' duck (in practice, a cream color) introduced for campaign dress; note the inconspicuous yellow piping at the collar, front edge, shoulder straps, cuffs, and cuff-flaps. The uniform is worn here with a practical straw hat, and rope-soled canvas espadrille shoes. The rifle is a Pattern 1861 Enfield artillery carbine, with its "yataghan" bayonet.

D: BRAZILIAN CAVALRY

The Brazilian line cavalry's smart blue uniforms were modified during the war for use on campaign. The many National Guard cavalry units had uniforms similar to those of the regulars, with the exception of the units raised in the southern provinces of Mato Grosso and Rio Grande do Sul, which retained traditional gaucho dress and weaponry.

D1: Trooper, 1st Line Cavalry Regiment, 1868
The simplified campaign uniform replaced the shako with a blue képi with the band in white, the cavalry's distinctive color; note also the metal numeral, identifying one of the best regiments in the army, fixed below the national cockade (green outer, yellow, blue center). A noticeable feature of some Brazilian uniforms was that the cuff flaps were piped all round, including the straight forward edge. Note too the piping on the collar and collar-patch, and brass shoulder scales. Campaign items include the canvas haversack and blue blanket roll; attached behind the crossbelt is a white leather ammunition pouch. The trooper has a new Spencer carbine, as issued to the Brazilian cavalry in 1867; this repeater gave them an enormous advantage when confronting at any distance Paraguayan cavalry armed with flintlocks.

D2: *Caçador*, Mounted *Caçadores*, 1869
Mounted Caçadores had the same uniforms and weapons as their light infantry counterparts; because they were temporary, "duration-only" units they had no need for a new specific uniform. This dismounted man has the same yellow-piped cream-colored outfit as worn by C4; he is armed with a Pattern 1861 Enfield artillery carbine, and a cavalry saber.

D3: *Gaucho*, National Guard Cavalry of Rio Grande do Sul, 1865
This traditional "cowboy" attire was widely worn not only in Argentina and Uruguay, but also in the neighboring Brazilian provinces of Mato Grosso and Rio Grande do Sul – the regions invaded by the Paraguayans in 1864. The gaucho costume was comfortable and practical for long days in the saddle, and increasing numbers of Brazilian cavalrymen adopted pieces of it during the war. Note the typical shape of the lance blade, similar to that of B1.

E: BRAZILIAN NATIONAL GUARD & VOLUNTEER INFANTRY, 1865

The largest part of the Brazilian Army comprised National Guard units and Volunteers. The National Guard was dressed very similarly to the regular army, with new campaign uniforms being introduced later in the war. During the course of the conflict, 55 corps of the famous *Voluntários da Pátria* were formed, each one having its own distinctive uniform. The uniforms might be quite extravagant, especially at the beginning of the war, reflecting a unit's place of origin or the personal taste of its commander.

E1: Volunteer, 48th Volunteer Battalion
This soldier's dress is one of the most characteristic worn by the volunteers. The unit numbered the 48th was also known as "Garibaldi's Volunteers," and although there is no definite proof it is reasonable to suppose that it was mainly recruited from volunteers from the large Italian community in Rio Grande do Sul and Uruguay. The uniform of mainly red and green (note the breast pocket flaps) is clearly inspired by that of Garibaldi's "Redshirts"; Giuseppe Garibaldi was famous in South America because of his prior involvement in conflicts in Rio Grande do Sul, Uruguay, and Argentina. The unit soon adopted a more standard campaign dress, similar to that of E4.

E2: Sergeant, 13th Volunteer Battalion
Many versions of summer dress were worn by volunteer units on campaign, this one being among the neatest. Note the Brazilian practice of wearing NCO rank stripes on the left forearm only. This veteran's four stripes identify him as a sergeant, and on the left upper sleeve he also displays a brass unit

The Brazilian soldier on the left is presumably a line cavalryman, armed with a carbine, saber, and (at his feet) a revolver. He is posing for a studio portrait with an officer from a unit of *Voluntários da Pátria*, wearing the hat and coat peculiar to these volunteers. Apart from the latter's black hat, compare with Plates D1 and C3 respectively for the colors.

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Brazilian gaucho from Rio Grande do Sul province. The gauchos fought as auxiliary light cavalry for both the Brazilian and Argentine armies, fulfilling an important role as scouts and skirmishers. They were the only Allied mounted troops able to confront the excellent Paraguayan cavalry on their own terms, having the same lifelong experience of horsemanship, and the same weaponry and style of fighting. Unarmed here, this horseman wears traditional costume including *poncho, chiripá* and white lace *calzoncillos*.

badge. He wears full field equipment; the broad crossbelt supports a cartridge pouch, the two narrower slings a brown leather canteen and a cylindrical brass case for carrying rolled documents. Note the brass rifle-cleaning brush and pricker suspended on cords attached to his right breast, and the white cap pouch.

E3: Zouave, *Zuavos da Bahia*

This short-lived battalion, disbanded in 1866, was a volunteer corps, but not administratively part of the *Voluntários da Pátria* system; it was composed entirely of ex-slaves from the plantations of Bahia province. Their uniform was a practically identical copy of that used by the contemporary French Zouaves in North Africa and was considered the most handsome outfit in the entire Brazilian army. This zouave has a white canvas haversack and wooden canteen and, like all these figures, he is armed with a Pattern 1853 Enfield percussion rifle.

E4: Fusilier, National Guard

With many variations of detail, this became the standard campaign dress for all National Guard and Volunteer units in *c*.1867. The blue blouse and white trousers were usual, though some units preferred all-blue uniforms, and a képi was the most popular alternative to this slouch hat. This soldier's belt equipment is either surplus French M1845 or copied from it, and was widespread in the Allied armies. The pack-straps over the top of the shoulder divide at the front stud, two straps passing down to support the weight of the belt by hooking into brass slides, the others passing beneath the arm to attach to the bottom of the pack. A large, deep-flapped cartridge-and-cap pouch was worn centrally at the back of the belt.

F: ARGENTINE INFANTRY

Argentine uniforms before the outbreak of the war showed the strong influence of Napoleon III's French army, which was evident in the new dress regulations issued after the end of the Argentine civil war. The regular regiments and battalions would be supplemented by a sizable National Guard and some Volunteer units. National Guard uniforms were similar to those of the standing army, while Volunteers had original and sometimes exotic outfits. The dress of the foot artillery followed the same patterns as those of the line infantry. Our main sources for Argentine uniforms of the Triple Alliance war are the detailed color plates by Marenco.

F1: Fusilier, Line Infantry, 1865

This uniform appears to be closely copied from the French 1860 infantry regulations, which were themselves modeled on the 1854 uniform of the Chasseurs à pied de la Garde. Note the green epaulets with yellow crescents, and the waisted cut of the crotch-length tunic (in French, *"basquine"*). This has green piping on the collar, cuffs, front and bottom edges, and tracing a scalloped *"Soubise"* pattern each side of the central rear vent. Decorative green piping also surrounds the side pockets of the very baggy red trousers, which are confined by two separate items. Buff leather *jambières*, with black top and bottom edges and a black lacing-strip down the outside, fit over white cloth "spat"-type gaiters. The belt equipment again appears to be the French M1845; there is no separate cap pouch, since caps were carried in a compartment of the cartridge pouch on the back of the belt. The weapon, as for F2 and F3, is a French M1842T percussion rifle.

F2: *Cazador,* Line Infantry, 1867

At this date the Argentine Army had no separate light infantry units, but a company of *cazadores* was included in each line battalion. The red and green képi bears the national cockade (blue, white, blue), and (obscured here) the traditional brass bugle-horn badge of cazadores. This is repeated on the collar of the new campaign dress then being introduced, with a green collar and cuffs and red piping. The trousers are confined by simple white gaiters.

F3: Fusilier, *"Legión Militar,"* 1865

This unit was one of two in the Argentine Army having a zouave uniform, though its use on campaign was probably limited. It bears a striking resemblance to that of the 9th New York Volunteer Infantry, "Hawkins' Zouaves," in 1862. The black belt equipment and pack also resemble US Army patterns, though 1865 would seem too early for the US government to be selling off surplus stocks. Many mercenaries or volunteers from Europe, including Swiss veterans of the Papal forces, were induced to enlist in this unit with false promises of land grants.

F4: Fusilier, 1st National Guard Battalion of Corrientes, 1865

Since it was Corrientes province that was invaded by the Paraguayans, many Volunteer and National Guard units were raised there by the local governor. This uniform is a good example of those issued to National Guard infantry units: red képi with green band and piping (similar to that of F2); tunic with dark green collar and cuffs, lighter green piping, and black frogging on the breast. Many other National Guard uniforms were of gray cloth, apparently purchased from American stocks. This soldier is armed with an old "Brown Bess" flintlock; the National Guard units were generally issued with older weapons than the regulars. He is drinking with a straw from a typical Argentine dried-gourd cup for yerba *maté* tea, a vegetable beverage very popular throughout all these countries.

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A young Argentine drummer boy of the line infantry. He wears a blue barracks cap with yellow piping and tassel; a blue jacket with brass buttons and yellow sleeve stripes; and blue trousers, with leather leggings and white gaiters in the French 1860 style. Boys were used as drummers or messengers by all the belligerent armies, and paid a high price in losses. In the last phase of the war the Paraguayan Army was almost entirely composed of boys – many as young as 12 – and old veterans; in Paraguay today the anniversary of the battle of Acosta Ñu, August 16, is celebrated as Children's Day in memory of the boys who died there. Many Paraguayan mothers followed their conscripted young sons to war in the hope of caring for them.

G: ARGENTINE CAVALRY

Argentina has a great tradition of horsemanship, and its cavalry earned a good reputation among the Allied forces. The majority were duration-only National Guard units, raised from gauchos in every province of the republic. The members of these local corps usually had simple campaign uniforms with a strong local input, often with only a blue jacket as "uniform," and some whole units wore traditional gaucho costume. The smaller element of regular cavalry originally had French-style uniforms, but soon developed different kinds of campaign dress.

G1: Trooper, regular cavalry; service dress, 1865

This was the appearance of the Argentine regular cavalry at the beginning of the war. The black shako has a yellow horsehair plume, and a bright blue-white-bright blue national cockade held by a yellow lace. Note that the collar and "lancer" plastron front of the jacket are edged in yellow. The white leather crossbelt supported a black leather ammunition pouch, and the main weapons were a cavalry saber and an Enfield M1842/51 musketoon. This elegant "French" uniform remained in use for formal duties until 1870.

G2: Trooper, National Guard Cavalry of Buenos Aires, 1867

This regiment from Buenos Aires province had the most handsome uniform among the National Guard cavalry units. The general appearance was that of a gaucho, but with a red jacket (an unusual color among such units) with a blue collar, pocket flaps, and cuffs. The "Carlist" cap was very popular in Argentina and Uruguay at the time; many officers wore it on campaign, particularly in Volunteer and cavalry units. The blue *chiripá* is worn over white linen undergarments. The weapons are a cavalry saber and an old "Tower" flintlock carbine. The traditional lance of the gauchos was also widely used in National Guard units.

G3: Trooper, regular cavalry; campaign dress, 1866

This is a good example of the new campaign uniforms that came into use from 1866. Simple and hard-wearing, they combined the colors blue and red in many variations. The red képi has a blue band and piping and the Argentine national cockade. Here the comfortable blue blouse has a red collar, cuffs, pocket flaps, and front button placket, and the blue trousers have a red stripe. Note the gaucho-style spurs.

H: URUGUAYAN ARMY

The uniforms of the Uruguayan Army, after the reorganization following the recent civil war, were also copied from contemporary Imperial French models. The small artillery corps wore uniforms similar to those of the infantry, and the National Guard were dressed similarly to the regulars. In 1870 there was a general reorganization of the army and the introduction of new uniforms, but by that time Uruguay had withdrawn from the war. All the figures on this plate are reconstructed, with acknowledgement, after the published plates of A. Del Pino Menck, the best available source for Uruguayan uniforms of the period.

H1: Fusilier, Infantry Battalion *Florida*, 1865

This famous battalion was the best unit in the Uruguayan Army. Formed as early as 1825, it was originally a regiment of cazadores raised from Uruguayans enlisted in the Argentine Army. It became part of the newly created Uruguayan Army after the Cisplatine War of 1825–28 that won the country its independence from Brazil, but its origin as cazadores explains the brass bugle-horn badge on the collar, and the green facing color. Many of the battalion's soldiers were ex-slaves, famous for their valor and their loyalty to President Flores, who had named the unit after the department of Uruguay from whence many of these soldiers came. The cut of the uniform and the design of the belt equipment show obvious similarities to the French 1845 infantry patterns. The crimson shako with green top and bottom bands and side chevrons displays a blue/white/blue national cockade, green falling feather plumes, and brass chinscales. The frock coat has a green collar, cuffs and epaulets and crimson piping, and the trousers have green stripes.

H2: Infantryman, campaign dress, 1866

This simple summer field dress became standard for Uruguayan infantry as the war progressed. Apart from the crimson and green barracks cap it is entirely white, with brass buttons. Like H1 and H3, this soldier is armed with a Pattern 1853 Enfield percussion rifle.

H3: Fusilier, Infantry Battalion *Voluntarios de la Libertad*, 1865

This was the only Uruguayan battalion to have a distinctive uniform: a simply cut "Carlist" blouse in blue with scarlet trim, worn with the traditional red headgear with a gold lace tassel from the crown (obscured here).

H4: Major, Cavalry Regiment *Soriano*, 1865

This unit was formed on May 17, 1865. As in the Argentine Army, the Uruguayan cavalry used elements of gaucho dress in its uniforms; this officer has the gaucho's poncho, boots with decorated spurs, and peculiar horse-whip looped to his wrist. The lapels of the jacket are only temporarily buttoned back. As on the contemporary French infantry officer's *caban*, the rear seam of the forearms opened to show a red lining, and heavy gold thread loops crossed this to engage with gold ball buttons.

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Dedication

A special thought for my family, in particular my heroic grandparents Maria and Walter, and my parents Maria Rosaria and Benedetto, without whose love and support neither I nor this work could exist.

Author's Note & Acknowledgments

Although many European military observers were sent to report upon the war for their governments, and were present at all the major battles, today this bloody and influential conflict is little known outside Latin America. While the main purpose of this book is to give a concise account of the organization, uniforms, and operations of the four armies involved, it has a wider aim. We sometimes forget that there was a part of the Western world that was fully independent from Europe after 1825–30, and that throughout the 19th century it had its own armies, conflicts, uniforms, and significant leaders. The present author would argue the rewards of studying how the military world of these countries evolved, through both local experience and international influences, and he is grateful to those who have, over the years, requested a book on this subject. Special thanks are due to the series editor, the legendary Martin Windrow, whose indirect inspiration was fundamental in the development of my personal interest in military matters; and to the great military artist Giuseppe Rava, whose talents have brought to life once again the soldiers described in these pages.

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Giuseppe Rava, via Borgotti 17, 48018 Faenza (RA), Italy
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info@g-rav.it

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Editor's Note

This text follows sources in both Spanish and Portuguese, thus the inconsistent spelling styles of some place-names and battles.